

8-11-2017

## Determining Adult Perceptions of Youth on Southern Region Ffa Nominating Committees

Emily Marie Keeton

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/td>

---

### Recommended Citation

Keeton, Emily Marie, "Determining Adult Perceptions of Youth on Southern Region Ffa Nominating Committees" (2017). *Theses and Dissertations*. 1354.  
<https://scholarsjunction.msstate.edu/td/1354>

This Graduate Thesis - Open Access is brought to you for free and open access by the Theses and Dissertations at Scholars Junction. It has been accepted for inclusion in Theses and Dissertations by an authorized administrator of Scholars Junction. For more information, please contact [scholcomm@msstate.libanswers.com](mailto:scholcomm@msstate.libanswers.com).

Determining adult perceptions of youth on southern region FFA nominating committees

By

Emily Keeton

A Thesis  
Submitted to the Faculty of  
Mississippi State University  
in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements  
for the Degree of Master of Science  
in Agriculture and Extension Education  
in the School of Human Sciences

Mississippi State, Mississippi

August 2017

Copyright by

Emily Keeton

2017

Determining adult perceptions of youth on southern region FFA nominating committees

By

Emily Keeton

Approved:

---

Laura L. Greenhaw  
(Major Professor)

---

Tommy M. Phillips  
(Minor Professor)

---

Laura Hall Downey  
(Committee Member)

---

Carla Jagger  
(Committee Member)

---

Michael E. Newman  
(Graduate Coordinator)

---

George M. Hopper  
Dean  
College of Agriculture and Life Sciences

Name: Emily Keeton

Date of Degree: August 11, 2017

Institution: Mississippi State University

Major Field: Agriculture and Extension Education

Major Professor: Dr. Laura L. Greenhaw

Title of Study: Determining adult perceptions of youth on southern region FFA  
nominating committees

Pages in Study 80

Candidate for Degree of Master of Science

Southern region state FFA nominating committees utilize adults and students to elect state FFA officers. However, the role of the adult nominating committee members is up to the discretion of the state FFA nominating committee coordinators. In the nine states studied in the southern FFA region, five states utilized adults as voting members of the nominating committee, and four states utilized them as consultants. Adults completed a modified version of the Inventory of Adult Attitudes and Behaviors instrument, and the majority's preferred style of working with students was "regarding youth as resources." However, students had mixed feelings about working with adults. They explained they were excited to work with them, but as they began the nominating committee process, they felt their thoughts were not being heard by the adults. No statistically significant relationship existed between adult preferred styles and student character and connection.

## DEDICATION

To the 2012 National FFA Nominating Committee. It was with you I was able to fully realize the potential FFA can bring out in a group of people who are not similar in any way, yet exactly the same.

## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Chaney Mosley, I would be remiss to not first. Thank you for pushing me to get to this point in my academic career. I would not and could not have accomplished this goal without your vote of confidence.

Mama and Daddy, thank you for encouraging me not just the last two years but every, single day. Thank you for wanting the best for me and for your unwavering support. I love you both so much!

Justin, I am so thankful for the kind, loving man you are. Thank you for always supporting me through this last year. I love you endlessly.

McKayla and Kenna, I cannot adequately express the amount of gratitude I feel towards you both. Thank you for making the days in the office not so long, entertaining my crazy ideas to pass the time, and for always, always, always being there for me. I feel privileged to have gone through this experience with you, and I am so thankful for the lifelong friendships we made.

Dr. Hock, thank you for starting my graduate career off in the right direction and for your dedication to my learning while I was your advisee. I learned so much from you, and I am so glad to know you.

Dr. Greenhaw, thank you for sticking with me when I was not confident in my abilities. I am so glad you were my advisor through this process, and your guidance was invaluable. Dr. Jagger, Dr. Downey, and Dr. Phillips, thank you all for your patience and

guidance while walking with me through the research process. The skills I have learned from all of you are truly appreciated!

And finally, to the southern region FFA nominating committee coordinators, thank you. You are the reason I was able to begin writing this document. Thank you so much for your help.



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

DEDICATION .....	ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS .....	iii
LIST OF TABLES .....	viii
LIST OF FIGURES .....	ix
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION .....	1
Statement of the Problem .....	2
Purpose of the Study and Research Objectives .....	3
Significance of the Study.....	3
Limitations.....	4
Assumptions .....	5
Definitions .....	5
II. REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE .....	8
National FFA Organization Structure/Breakdown of the National FFA	
Nominating Committee .....	8
First Year Responsibilities .....	10
Second Year Responsibilities .....	10
Third Year Responsibilities .....	11
Positive Youth Development.....	11
5 C's of Positive Youth Development.....	13
Connection and Character .....	14
Youth-Adult Partnerships.....	15
Spectrum of Attitudes.....	18
Summary.....	20
III. METHODS AND MATERIALS.....	22
Research Design.....	23
Qualitative Research.....	24
Quantitative Research.....	24
Population.....	25

Sample .....	25
State FFA staff.....	25
Adult nominating committee members .....	26
Student nominating committee members .....	26
Data Collection Instruments .....	27
State FFA Staff.....	27
Surveys .....	27
Adult nominating committee members .....	27
Student nominating committee members .....	28
Data Collection Procedures .....	31
Content Analysis .....	31
Adult Nominating Committee Member Survey .....	31
Student Nominating Committee Member Survey .....	32
Data Analysis Techniques .....	32
Content Analysis .....	32
State FFA bylaws .....	33
Follow-up questions to state FFA staff .....	33
Open – ended questions on the student questionnaire .....	33
Quantitative Analysis .....	34
Summary.....	34
IV. FINDINGS.....	35
Demographic Information .....	36
Objective One.....	38
Adults Utilized as Voting Members.....	40
Adults Utilized as Consultants .....	40
Objective Two .....	42
Enthusiastic to make connections with adults .....	42
Disconnect from the adults .....	43
Objective Three .....	43
Objective Four .....	44
Objective Five .....	44
V. DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS .....	46
Discussion.....	47
Objective One.....	47
Objective Two .....	48
Objective Three .....	49
Objective Four .....	50
Objective Five .....	50
Recommendations .....	51
Research Recommendations.....	51
Practitioner Recommendations.....	52

REFERENCES ..... 54

APPENDIX

A. PARENTAL CONSENT DOCUMENTS .....58

B. EMAILS TO STATE FFA STAFF, ADULT NOMINATING  
COMMITTEE MEMBERS, AND STUDENT NOMINATING  
COMMITTEE MEMBERS .....61

C. ADULT CONSENT AND INSTRUMENT .....65

D. STUDENT INSTRUMENT.....73

## LIST OF TABLES

3.1	Modified Measure of PYD – Questions and Alpha Scores .....	30
3.2	Open – ended Questions for Student Nominating Committee Members .....	31
4.1	Adult Nominating Committee Member Demographics.....	37
4.2	Student Nominating Committee Member Demographics.....	38
4.3	Adult Nominating Committee Member Preferred Approach .....	44

## LIST OF FIGURES

2.1	A Developmental Contextual View of PYD.....	15
2.2	The Spectrum of Adult Attitudes Toward Young People.....	19
A.1	Parental Consent for Survey .....	59
B.1	Recruitment email for state FFA staff .....	62
B.2	Recruitment email for adult nominating committee members .....	63
B.3	Recruitment email for student nominating committee members .....	64
C.1	Adult Instrument Consent.....	66
C.2	Adult Instrument .....	69
D.1	Student assent.....	74
D.2	Student instrument .....	75

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTION

According to Eccles and Gootman (2002), “adolescence is a pivotal period for youth to acquire the attitudes, competencies, values, and social connections that will help carry them towards successful adulthood” (pg. 1). Youth today face many choices, changes and challenges, including choosing which peer groups to associate with, dealing with biological changes, and possibly engaging in risky behaviors such as underage drinking and drug usage (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Though most adolescents do not grow up in a negative environment (Lerner & Lerner, 2005), at least 25% of adolescents are at risk of not achieving “productive adulthood” (Eccles & Gootman, 2002, p. 2). The theory of positive youth development (PYD) focuses on encouraging youth to stay on a positive life trajectory, and one avenue is by becoming involved with a youth organization and building supportive relationships with positive adult role models (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). Youth-adult partnerships are an innovative technique used as a buffer against youth engaging in risky behaviors, and youth organizations implement these partnerships in a variety of ways.

According to GuideStar (2017), almost 37,000 organizations have committed themselves to the development of United States youth. Well known youth organizations among the list include 4-H, Boy Scouts of America, and The National FFA Organization (FFA). The National FFA Organization (National FFA Organization, 2015b) is an

agriculturally based youth leadership organization that aims to “make a difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premiere leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education” (FFA Mission, para. 1). Each year, the FFA elects six national officers who serve FFA members and represent the image of the organization (National FFA Organization, 2015c), and these officers are elected through a nominating committee composed of nine college-age FFA members and three adult consultants. The student members and the adult consultants create a partnership for the purpose of electing national FFA officers. The National FFA Organization promotes itself as a youth-led organization, therefore the student nominating committee is responsible for interviewing, deliberating, and electing each team of national FFA officers; the adult consultants are responsible for keeping the process running smoothly by scoring the rubrics and serving as a voice of reason when needed. While national FFA officers are elected by a student nominating committee, each state association determines their own process for nominating committees.

### **Statement of the Problem**

Cargo, Grams, Ottoson, Ward, and Green (2003) found that empowerment is a result of PYD. Bruce and Ricketts (2007) found that national FFA nominating committee members felt the adult consultants fostered an environment of helpfulness and empowerment for them, aligning with part of FFA’s mission statement, to promote premiere leadership and personal growth (National FFA Organization, 2015b). While research on how PYD is observed in youth organizations like 4-H (Lerner & Lerner, 2009), little, if any, research has been conducted on state FFA nominating committees and how student and adult members interact.

## **Purpose of the Study and Research Objectives**

The purpose of the study was to determine how adult members on southern region state FFA nominating committees regarded the student members. Additionally, the study aimed to identify the relationship between two constructs of PYD, character and connection, regarding the student nominating committee members and the perceptions adults have concerning those student members. The research objectives were:

1. Describe the procedures for choosing nominating committee members and the operating processes in the states of the National FFA Organization's southern region,
2. Describe experiences as perceived by 2016 student nominating committee members,
3. Identify how 2016 southern FFA region adult nominating committee members regard student members of the nominating committee on the Inventory of Adult Attitudes and Behavior,
4. Describe the relationship between adult nominating committee members' attitudes regarding student nominating committee members and attributes of PYD students may gain from serving on a state FFA nominating committee,
5. Investigate the relationship between age and gender of adult nominating committee members as it relates to how they regard the student nominating committee members.

## **Significance of the Study**

Within the last 25 years, PYD has taken the lead in youth development research (Lerner, 2005). State FFA staff who work with nominating committees would benefit



from understanding how adult members regard student members and how this might impact PYD. Understanding how adults on the nominating committees view student members may indicate how much input students are actually giving to the process. This understanding may provide state FFA staff with additional opportunities to ensure that FFA is, in fact, youth-led.

### **Limitations**

The limitations of the study are as follows:

1. Due to the sample size being small, the results cannot be generalized beyond this study.
2. Reaching out to state FFA staff and receiving permission as well as nominating committee member contact information proved to be a challenge.
3. Some state staff opted to disseminate the recruitment email themselves, therefore relinquishing the researcher from knowing if the nominating committee members ever received the initial recruitment email.
4. Although confidentiality was maintained, nominating committee members may have felt uneasy about some of the questions asked, and they may have not given detailed answers.
5. Minors who received the initial email may have considered the parental consent form too much trouble, therefore foregoing being a part of the study.

## **Assumptions**

The assumptions of this study are as follows:

1. Participants were able to focus solely on their experience serving on the nominating committee, not any other FFA experiences.
2. Participants were honest with answers they provided on the questionnaire.
3. Student nominating committee members honestly and accurately portrayed their experiences on the open-ended questionnaire.

## **Definitions**

Adult nominating committee member: a person who served in an adult role on the state nominating committee and had a voting role.

Adult consultant: a person who served in a role of guidance for the nominating committee. Consultants did not have voting roles on nominating committees.

Inventory of Adult Attitudes and Behavior: a survey instrument developed by William Lofquist to describe how adults regard youth. It gives adults an opportunity to consider how their approach to working with youth may affect youth's development (Lofquist, 1989, p. 44).

The National FFA Organization (FFA): FFA is an intracurricular student organization for those interested in agriculture and leadership. It is one of the three components of agricultural education (National FFA Organization, 2015j).

Nominating committee: a committee composed of individuals who work together to elect FFA officers.

Nominating committee coordinator: the state FFA staff in charge of coordinating the nominating committee.

Objects: If adults view youth as objects, they assume the attitude that they know what is best for that young person, and he or she should take advantage of the opportunity the adult presented (Lofquist, 1989).

Positive Youth Development: perspective is a strength-based conception of adolescence. Derived from developmental systems theory, the perspective stressed that PYD emerges when the potential plasticity of human development is aligned with developmental assets (Lerner, Almerigi, Theokas, & Lerner, 2005).

Recipients: If adults view youth as recipients, the attitude is that the youth will benefit from the participation, but he or she will not contribute anything to the design process of the program (Lofquist, 1989).

Resources: If adults view youth as resources, they see the contribution youth can make to the organization. Leadership and decision making roles are shared (Lofquist, 1989).

Southern Region: states included in FFA's southern region are: Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, and the Virgin Islands

Spectrum of Adult Attitudes: a spectrum displaying three potential styles concerning how an adult might approach working with youth. The three styles include objects, recipients, or resources (Lofquist, 1989, p. 47).

Student nominating committee member: an FFA member who served on the state nominating committee.

Youth-adult partnership: intentional relationships between youth and adults that afford each person equal access and opportunity to learn from the other, use their skills, dream together, and engage in community change and leadership (Wheeler & Edlebeck, 2006).

## CHAPTER II

### REVIEW OF THE LITERATURE

This literature review is an extensive look at the National FFA Organization and how it exemplifies PYD. More specifically, the literature review examines the national FFA nominating committee process and how youth-adult partnerships are used in that setting, including the roles of the student members and the adult consultants. The literature explains PYD in depth and explores the 5 Cs of PYD, more specifically, the constructs of character and connection. Further, youth-adult partnerships will be defined and linked to William Lofquist's Spectrum of Adult Attitudes. Positive youth development and the Spectrum of Adult Attitudes was utilized as the conceptual framework of this study.

#### **National FFA Organization Structure/Breakdown of the National FFA Nominating Committee**

In 1928, The Future Farmers of America was established at the Baltimore Hotel in Kansas City, MO. Thirty-three young men representing 18 different states made up the delegate body, and Leslie Applegate was elected as the first national FFA president by a popular vote by the delegate body (National FFA Organization, 2015a). The Future Farmers of America was formed to be a strictly youth-led organization, and adult advisors were elected by student national officers to help them run the organization. These advisors made up the Board of Trustees. However, the scope of FFA expanded in

such a way that minors could no longer handle the financial and legal affairs of the organization by themselves, therefore an advisory council was created to oversee the national officers, and the positions of national advisor and executive secretary were to be filled by employees of the United States Department of Education. The roles of both adults and the student national officers changed in 1950 when FFA was federally chartered. The advisory council became the Board of Directors and was named the official governing body of FFA. The Board of Trustees became the Board of Student Officers, or national FFA officers. They were able to make motions before the Board of Directors, but they no longer reserved the rights to solely make decisions on their own merit. The shift in power was the beginning of FFA promoting youth-adult partnerships within the organization, even if the term had not been clearly defined yet (Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis, 2016).

The National FFA Organization is broken down into three levels: national, state, and local (National FFA Organization, 2015f). The national level is overseen by a board of directors and the six national FFA officers. They are responsible for securing stakeholders and setting the vision for FFA. State FFA associations are led by state FFA officers, and the number of state FFA officers in a state varies. They are responsible for leading the membership of their associations. According to The National FFA Organization (2015f), the local level is considered the heart of FFA. Local chapters are chartered through any public schools system that offers an agricultural education program. Chapter officers are elected, and the agriculture teacher(s) serves as the advisor for the chapter.

National FFA Officers fill multiple roles (National FFA Organization, 2015h). They are responsible for serving the National FFA Organization for one year, teaching leadership skills to state FFA officers, and motivating FFA members to be involved in their local chapters. Before they are elected, national FFA officer candidates go before a nominating committee composed of nine college age students who are assisted by three adult consultants. The nominating committee has two major roles to fill: interviewing national FFA officer candidates and deliberating among each other to select the next team of national FFA officers (National FFA Organization, 2015h). The adult consultants are elected by the FFA board of directors and have a variety of jobs, including but not limited to training the student nominating committee, tabulating the scores, reviewing competencies with the nominating committee before each round, and serving as a voice of conscience (National FFA Organization, 2015h). The three adult members serve for a three-year term. According to the National Officer Selection Process Handbook (2015h), their responsibilities are as follows.

### **First Year Responsibilities**

1. Observe the process to gain understanding of its functions.
2. Serve as a timekeeper and supervise scorecards.

### **Second Year Responsibilities**

1. Assist in training the committee.
2. Supervise the interview process
3. Administer the written exam.
4. Help the nominating committee secretary to compile the minutes.

### **Third Year Responsibilities**

1. Serve as the adult chair.
2. Meet with FFA staff to review the process.
3. Review the schedule of the rounds prior to National FFA Convention.
4. Coordinate with FFA staff prior to convention to ensure all appropriate arrangements have been made for the selection process.
5. Communicate with adult consultants prior to convention.

All adult consultants are responsible for submitting an evaluation report to the National FFA board superintendent and recommending improvements to the process. They are also required to help the nominating committee keep the integrity of the process in check by diverting conversation about candidates between the committee members, encouraging the committee morale through longer interviews, and facilitating meaningful conversation about how to improve the process.

### **Positive Youth Development**

Prior to the early 1990s, those who worked with children and youth relied on deficit models, which focused primarily on reducing risk behaviors (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2006) Deficit models driven by eliminating risky behaviors (i.e. drinking, using drugs, practicing unsafe sex, etc.) inadvertently labeled youth as being “problems,” therefore unintentionally contributing to the problem of youth exhibiting those risky behaviors. In 1985, the Carnegie Corporation began the Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development (Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development, 1995). While this report highlighted risky behaviors exhibited by youth, what was different about it



were the suggestions for treatment, including family engagement and school employee training on recognizing at-risk youth.

By the early 1990s, three ideas surfaced concerning PYD. Benson et al. (2006) recognized these ideas as

1. identifying “building blocks” to help youth stay on a positive life trajectory,
2. attributing “youth problems” more to environments than to the youth themselves, and
3. mainstreaming a need for change.

Benson et al. (2006) further explained PYD encompasses four features.

1. It is comprehensive, linking several ecologies. These include families, schools, friendships, and neighborhoods.
2. It seeks to promote youth engagement in positive experiences.
3. It promotes healthy development in youth.
4. It is inclusive, collecting ideas from many entities, such as developmental youth programs, risk and resiliency programs, and public health programs.

Positive youth development is an umbrella term that covers many areas of work (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2006). According to the research, it embraces a variety of disciplines, including adolescent development and education. According to Benson, Scales, Hamilton, and Sesma (2006), PYD rests on six principles:

1. All youth are capable of positive growth and development,
2. A positive developmental trajectory is enabled when youth are surrounded by nurturing relationships,

3. Positive development is enabled when youth participate in multiple positive relationships,
4. All youth benefit from these relationships,
5. Community is a critical “delivery system” for PYD,
6. Youth are major actors in their own development and are important resources that enable PYD.

Positive youth development is developed through competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring, or more commonly known as the 5 Cs. The following section describes how it is built through these five constructs.

### **5 C's of Positive Youth Development**

Positive youth development describes youth as people to be nurtured, not managed. It also promotes the 5 C's, which aim to describe the effects of PYD and emphasize strengths of youth (Bowers et al., 2010). They are competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (or compassion). According to research regarding the 5 Cs (Bowers et al. 2010, Lerner et al., 2005, Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003), competence is having a positive view of one's actions in domain-specific areas including social, academic, and athletic. Confidence is an internal sense of overall positive self-worth. Connection is the ability to form positive bonds with people in which both parties contribute to the relationship. Character is respect for societal and cultural rules and being able to discern a sense of right and wrong. Finally, caring is defined as a sense of sympathy and empathy for others. Oftentimes, a sixth C will emerge; contribution, or giving back to the community that helped shape the young person into the young adult he or she became. The 5 Cs often describe “thriving youth,” and when a youth manifests the

5 Cs over adolescence, his or her life trajectory will more than likely not be one of risk and problem behaviors, such as drug and alcohol abuse, unprotected sex, or gang violence.

### **Connection and Character**

Previous research indicates the 5 Cs are related to PYD (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). Robinson, Esters, Dotterer, McKee, and Tucker (2016) identified that youth who were involved in 4-H programs indicated higher levels of PYD than those who had never participated. In this particular study, 4-H participants scored significantly higher scores on four of the five Cs (confidence, connection, character, and caring) than those who were not 4-H members. Previous studies have reported PYD as a function of the 5 Cs (Lerner, Lerner, & Phelps, 2008).

Student nominating committee members have the opportunity to network with adults in their respective state's agricultural industry when they serve on a state nominating committee. They also have the opportunity to test and build their character as they score candidates who they may feel compelled to score a favorable way (i.e. family or friends). When youth are provided proper structure to enhance their development of the 5 Cs, they have a greater chance of becoming a thriving adult who will contribute to society (Lerner et al., 2005). Adults, regardless of holding a vote on the nominating committee or serving as an adult consultant, have the power to influence the student nominating committee members think critically about the roles they are filling. Figure 2.1 is a visual representation of how a positive life trajectory is enabled by PYD.

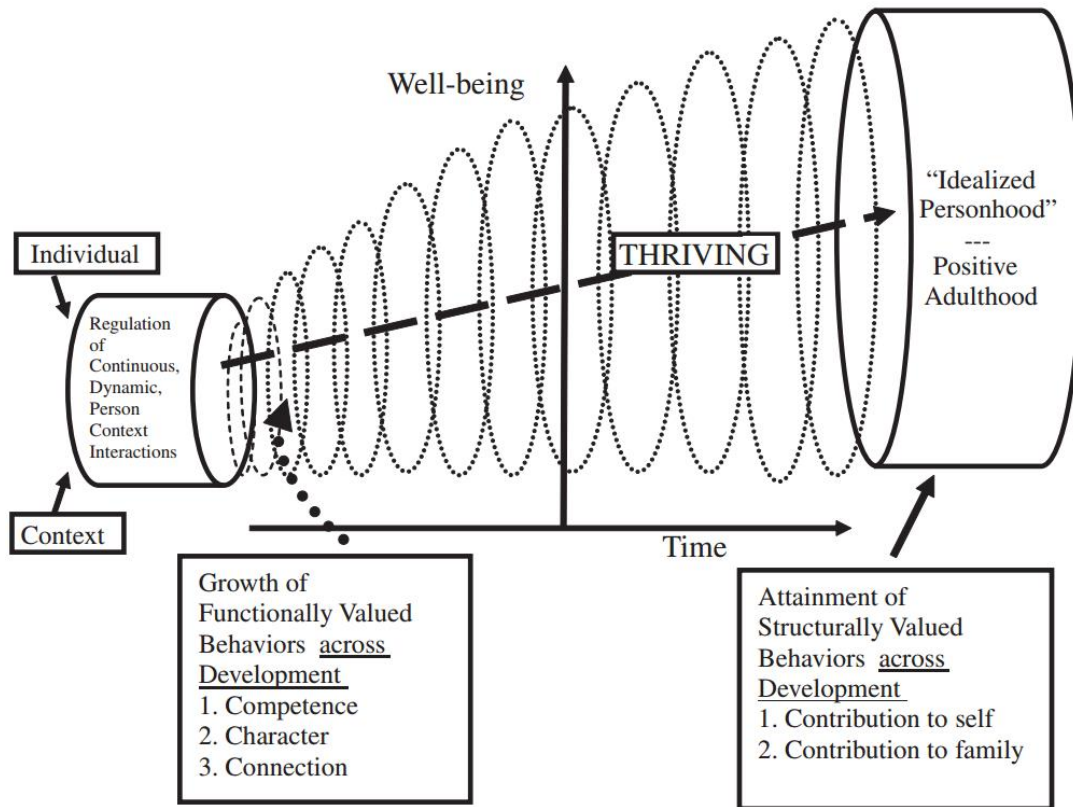


Figure 2.1 A Developmental Contextual View of PYD

*Note:* Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Almerigi, J. B., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Gestsdottir, S., & Smith, L. M. (2005). Positive Youth Development, Participation in community youth development programs, and community contributions of fifth-grade adolescents findings from the first wave of the 4-H study of Positive Youth Development. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 25(1), 17-71. doi:10.1177/0272431604272461

### Youth-Adult Partnerships

Adults frequently perceive that youth are in need of assistance rather than being community assets (Jones & Perkins 2006). Youth-adult partnerships (Y-APs) are an innovation being used to combat this notion and promote youth development by building strong youth programs and communities (Camino, 2005). Wheeler and Edlebeck (2006) described Y-APs as “intentional relationships between youth and adults that afford each person equal access and opportunity to learn from the other, use their skills, dream

together, and engage in community change and leadership” (p. 92). The idea behind Y-APs is for youth and adults to collaborate on community projects, town meetings, and program planning to foster an atmosphere of empowerment between youth and adults. They are a way for youth and adults to collaborate on issues that matter to them both. The demand for these partnerships has increased because research has shown that when youth take part in adult roles, the potential is there to maximize the youths’ senses of community (Zeldin, Camino, & Mook, 2005). The reasons for utilizing Y-APs are limitless as Zeldin, Camino, and Mook (2005) pointed out there is no “bottom line purpose” for engaging in Y-APs. Some engage in them to promote PYD, while others see the primary purpose of Y-APs building a sense of community. According to Camino (2000), Y-APs are based on three major premises.

1. Strong communities are built on participation from its members, including youth.
2. If youth are able to participate in community affairs as participants, they will have the opportunity to experience development.
3. Adults can overcome negative attitudes and misinformation about youth if they join with youth to address community concerns.

Camino (2000) stated Y-APs are multidimensional constructs. They contain principles and values which guide behavior, a set of skills through which behavior is focused, and a method to implement and achieve collective action. When youth and adults enter into a program with the understanding their relationship is a partnership, shared principles and values are more easily incorporated into the plans and actions they will create to achieve a common goal. The question shifts from, “Should adults and youth

work together,” to, “How should adults and youth work together?” As adults and youth work together, the skills to do so will not emerge on their own, even if they are committed to incorporating the principals they set forth for themselves. Camino (2000) further discussed that adults and youth must be taught how to communicate with each other, and most importantly, how to take constructive criticism and coaching from each other. As they develop communication and teamwork skills, adults will have a greater probability of coaching youth instead of simply telling them what to do. Because of this, the goals Y-APs want to achieve have a greater chance of coming to fruition.

Jones and Perkins (2006) reported adult perceptions of youth are often misconstrued, and adults may be unaware of positive trends in youth development. When adults try to relate to youth, they may fall back on their own experiences, not readily realizing their experiences may be and are different than the youth of today (Gilliam & Bales, 2001). One dilemma that has widened the gap between youth and adults is they both have limited experience working together as partners (Zeldin, Larson, Camino, & O’Connor, 2005). Camino (2005) stated youth more than likely want to share responsibilities with adults, but do not want to take all of the responsibility on themselves; youth welcome coaching, mentoring, modeling of appropriate behaviors, and sharing tasks with adults.

Over the last 88 years, FFA membership has evolved from only including young men to also embracing young women who live in United States territories. Not only has the organizational structure shifted, but so has the process for electing national officers, evolving into a nominating committee process. FFA claims to be a youth-led organization, and one aspect of that is its nominating committee process. Wheeler and

Edlebeck (2006) said youth-adult partnerships are effective, inspiring, and mutually dependent. Partnership replaces empowerment, meaning everyone has equal talents to offer. When youth have strong, positive relationships with caring adults, it is a good indicator PYD is occurring (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2006). If a state chooses to utilize a nominating committee to elect its officers, it is common among state FFA associations for them be composed of adults and high school FFA members. However, little research has been conducted to measure the perceptions and attitudes of adults regarding high school committee members.

### **Spectrum of Attitudes**

Contrasting the model of PYD, the Deficit model attempts to “fix” youth by only focusing on problem behaviors (Eccles & Gootman, 2002, p. 134). The guiding principles of this model focus on youth’s weaknesses and what they do wrong. Until the last few years, the Deficit model has dominated adolescent research.

Camino said, “Practitioners know the concept of Y-APs as derived from Lofquist (1989), who posited a typology of adult attitudes to assess approaches used in prevention and youth development programming” (Camino, 2000, p. 12). In an attempt better understand whether an adult perceives youth as assets or problems to be managed, William Lofquist introduced the Spectrum of Adult Attitudes Toward Youth, claiming adults regard youth as objects, recipients, or resources, (Lofquist, 1989). Based on the assumption attitudes are closely related to behavior, the spectrum allows adults to reflect on how they view youth and shape an appropriate approach for working with them. The following descriptions by Lofquist (1989) depict the three main portions of the spectrum.

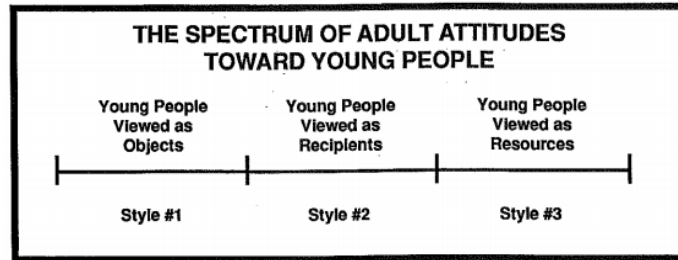


Figure 2.2 The Spectrum of Adult Attitudes Toward Young People

*Note:* Lofquist, W. A. (1989). The spectrum of attitudes. *The technology of prevention workbook: A leadership development program* (p. 39). Tuscan, AZ: Associates for Youth Development

Lofquist (1989) explained how through the Spectrum of Attitudes, adults regard youth as objects, recipients, or as resources. When youth are viewed as objects, this section of the attitudinal spectrum encompasses many standpoints. On one end, adults view youth as “property.” Adults see very little value in youth’s opinions and ideas but do see the value of the youth serving the adult. In a less extreme case, the attitude is that the adult knows what is best for the youth and sees the youth as the object of their good intentions. Through the adult’s eyes, the youth is to take advantage of the opportunities designed by the adult(s). When youth are viewed as recipients, the emphasis lies within the assumption youth are the recipients of the benefits the program has to offer. Adults control how and when the youth will receive or be introduced to these opportunities, not how the youth will contribute to the design process of the program. Youth are allowed to participate because they will value the experience. Lofquist (1989) pointed out, “this attitude demonstrates a concern for preparing young people for the future as responsible decision makers” (p. 40). When youth are viewed as resources, adults respect and value youths’ opinions and ideas as they relate to the development of a program, meeting, etc.



Regarding youth as resources allows youth to feel comfortable contributing to the decision making process, and leadership roles can be shared by adults and youth alike. This may require change on behalf of the program's mission and the policies by which it operates. Lofquist (1989) wrote, "If we are interested in promoting personal growth and increased organizational effectiveness, it is more effective to create genuine experiences wherein people are engaged as resources, seeing personal growth as a byproduct, than by an attempt to produce growth as a direct objective" (p. 42).

Lofquist (1989) recognized that a "blurred mixture" is what commonly happens with Y-APs. Camino (2005) stated three misconceptions about Y-APs, including youth are the only important people in the partnerships, adults need to get out of the way and relinquish their power to the youth, and that youth do everything of importance. However, if the developmental process adults go through when they are involved in Y-APs is ignored, it could be detrimental to the success of the partnership.

### **Summary**

The theory of PYD and the utilization of Y-APs are mingled within the National FFA Nominating Committee Process. As college-age FFA members and adult consultants work together to elect a new team of national FFA officers, the Five C's of PYD emerge in the student-led committee as they connect with each other as members of a group, gain confidence as young leaders within the organization, build character by keeping the integrity of the process, attain competence in interviewing skills, and exhibit a caring attitude towards each other by listening to opinions and taking them into consideration as they deliberate on the new team of national FFA officers. FFA is a youth-led organization, but adults are strategically placed throughout its structure to

accommodate what youth are unqualified to do, like handling the financial and legal aspects of the organization. Southern region FFA associations may use nominating committees as the basis of how they choose state FFA officers, but the effectiveness of how well they work together to promote positive youth development in a youth-adult partnership has yet to be discovered.

## CHAPTER III

### METHODS AND MATERIALS

The purpose of the study was to determine how adult members on southern region state FFA nominating committees regarded the student members. Additionally, the study aimed to identify the relationship between two constructs of PYD, character and connection, regarding the student nominating committee members and the perceptions adults have concerning those student members. The research objectives were:

1. Describe the procedures for choosing nominating committee members and the operating processes in the states of the National FFA Organization's southern region,
2. Describe experiences as perceived by 2016 student nominating committee members,
3. Identify how 2016 southern FFA region adult nominating committee members regard student members of the nominating committee on the Inventory of Adult Attitudes and Behavior,
4. Describe the relationship between adult nominating committee members' attitudes regarding student nominating committee members and attributes of PYD students may gain from serving on a state FFA nominating committee,

5. Investigate the relationship between age and gender of adult nominating committee members as it relates to how they regard the student nominating committee members.

### **Research Design**

A mixed-methods research design was utilized for this study. A mixed-methods study involves the use of both quantitative and qualitative research methods (Fraenkel, Wallen, & Hyun, 2015). Mixed-method research allows researchers to explore relationships between variables in depth. Furthermore, they help confirm relationships that are discovered between the variables (Fraenkel et al., 2015). According to Fraenkel et al. (2015):

“Quantitative researchers usually base their work on the belief the world is a single reality that can be approximated by careful study. Qualitative researchers, on the other hand, are likely to assume that the world is made up on multiple realities, socially constructed by different individual views of the same situation” (pp.7, 10).

This particular research method was selected to help determine the relationships between adult attitudes toward student nominating committee members and the attributes of PYD the students may have gained. Demographics, such as age, gender, race, which state they each served, and the number of nominating committees on which a participant has served were collected.

## **Qualitative Research**

Qualitative research is conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of an issue (Creswell, 2007). According to Creswell (2007), “qualitative research begins with assumptions, a worldview, the possibly use of theoretical lens, and the study of research problems inquiring into the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem” (p. 37). According to Fraenkel et al. (2015), “participants often tend to be directly involved in the research process itself” (p. 10). Researchers gather data through interviews, documents, and observations, build patterns from those sources, and then decipher meanings from the participants about the problem or issue they are researching (Creswell, 2007). The qualitative data gathered in this study were state FFA bylaws and responses from state staff and student nominating committee members through open-ended questions.

## **Quantitative Research**

According to Fraenkel et al. (2015), “quantitative researchers seek to establish relationships between variables and look for and sometimes explain the *causes* of such relationships” (p. 10). Generally, quantitative research seeks to make generalizations that transcend particular settings (Fraenkel et al., 2015). Correlational research was utilized to describe an existing relationship between variables (Fraenkel et al., 2015). For this study, a correlational component was included to describe the relationship between adult nominating committee member style preferences and the ages and genders of those adults.

## **Population**

The population for this study consisted of nine of the eleven 2016 southern FFA region nominating committees' members and the nominating committee coordinator of each state. The southern region of the National FFA Organization is composed of 11 states and territories, including Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, and the Virgin Islands (National FFA Organization, 2015d). Puerto Rico and The Virgin Islands were not a part of the study. The potential population consisted of forty – three adults, forty – nine students, and nine state FFA staff.

## **Sample**

According to Creswell (2007), “criterion sampling works well when all individuals studied represent people who have experiences the phenomenon” (p. 128). Criterion sampling was used because the population was specific to southern region FFA nominating committees. A census was conducted, and from that census a response rate was recorded. Nineteen adults and fourteen students responded to the questionnaire. Nine state staff were contacted via email, and all nine responded.

## **State FFA staff**

The principle investigator identified and collected the nine state FFA bylaws. Following the document collection, the principle investigator contacted nine state FFA executive secretaries via email and requested their state's 2016 nominating committee contact information (appendix B.1). If the state FFA executive secretary was not directly involved with organizing the nominating committee process, the principle investigator

was directed to the state FFA nominating committee coordinator. After receiving consent from the nine state staff, nominating committee contact information was collected from six of the nine state staff. Three state staff requested they disseminate the principle investigator's recruitment email themselves. One state allowed the adult nominating committee members to be emailed by the principle investigator but did not allow the student nominating committee members to be a part of the study.

#### ***Adult nominating committee members***

Upon receiving IRB approval after collecting state staff permission, 43 adult nominating committee members from the southern FFA region were contacted via email, requesting they complete a questionnaire regarding their experiences serving on a 2016 state FFA nominating committee (appendix B.2).

#### ***Student nominating committee members***

Upon receiving IRB approval and collecting state staff permission, 29 student nominating committee members were contacted by the principal investigator via email (see appendix B.3). Twenty student nominating committee members were contacted by the three remaining state nominating committee coordinators using the principle investigator's recruitment email. The recruitment email instructed the students under the age of 17 to complete a parental assent form and email it to the principal investigator before the questionnaire could be disseminated.

## **Data Collection Instruments**

### **State FFA Staff**

After conducting a content analysis on the southern region FFA bylaws, the nine state FFA staff were contacted via email and asked to provide details describing their nominating committee processes, the roles of the nominating committee members, and why/how they were chosen.

### **Surveys**

According to Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2014), “e-mail invitations should clearly state what is being asked of respondents, why they were selected, what the survey is about, who is conducting it, and how sample members can contact someone to get any questions they have answered” (p. 332). The initial recruitment e-mails followed these guidelines (appendix B). After IRB approval, only two reminder emails were disseminated to the adult and student nominating committee members. The first reminder was sent one week after the recruitment email, and the second reminder was sent the following week. The survey closed one week after the second reminder email.

### ***Adult nominating committee members***

The adult nominating committee members were asked to complete a modified version of the Inventory of Adult Attitudes and Behavior (appendix C.2) through an online Qualtrics survey. The Inventory of Adult Attitudes and Behavior was created to help adults determine how they regard youth, as objects, recipients, or as resources (Lofquist, 1989). It is a 24-item, self-reported opinion scale that ranges from 1 – 9, with 1 being “never my approach” to 9 being “always my approach.” Participants receive



separate scores for regarding youth as objects, recipients, or as resources. The highest score is the adult's preferred style for working with youth. The inventory was modified by the principle investigator to fit the nature of this study in order to focus on the experiences of serving on an FFA nominating committee. A panel of experts in FFA, PYD, and survey evaluation assessed for validity. The Inventory of Adult Attitudes and Behavior was distributed to populations outside the southern region for a pilot test but was not taken by any participants. At the conclusion of the modified questionnaire, adults were asked to identify their age and gender.

### ***Student nominating committee members***

The students were asked to complete a modified version of The Measure of PYD through an online Qualtrics survey (appendix D.2). It was originally developed to identify how 4-H involvement effects PYD. It was later modified after the "first wave" of findings indicated that youth programs must address both prevention and promotion (Lerner et al., 2005). The instrument measures five constructs of PYD: character, competence, connection, caring, and confidence. After reviewing the instrument, it was determined that connection and character were relevant constructs with regard to the nominating committee experience. Ten items from connection were measured on a five – point Likert-type scale where one is "strongly disagree," and five is "strongly agree." The range of scores for connection ranged from 10 – 50. Eleven items for character was measured on a five – point Likert-type scale where one is "not important," and five is "extremely important." The range of scores for character ranged from 11 – 55. The language was modified to reflect the experiences of the nominating committee. For example, in the connection construct, an original statement was, "In my family, I feel

useful and important.” It was modified to, “I felt useful and important on the nominating committee.” A character construct statement from the original instrument was, “Accepting responsibility for my actions when I make a mistake or get in trouble.” It was modified to, “Accepting responsibility for my part in the outcome of the nominating committee’s decisions.” The instrument can be found in appendix E.

The Measure of PYD was pilot tested by populations outside the southern region states included in the study. Table 3.1 displays the questions, and each construct is bolded and accompanied by a Cronbach’s alpha score used to determine reliability.

Table 3.1 Modified Measure of PYD – Questions and Alpha Scores

	Alpha
<b>Connection</b>	.92
The adults gave me help and support when I needed it.	
I had meaningful conversations with the adults on the nominating committee.	
I felt useful and important on the nominating committee.	
The adult nominating committee members really cared about me.	
I received a lot of encouragement from the adult members on the nominating	
The adult nominating committee members pushed me to be the best I could be.	
Serving on the nominating committee gave me many chances to make my state association better.	
The adult nominating committee members made me feel important.	
The adult nominating committee members listened to what I had to say.	
I felt like I mattered to the adults on the nominating committee	
<b>Character</b>	.875
Getting to know people who are of a different race than I am.	
Helping other people	
Helping my association be a better program to be involved in.	
Giving my time and talents to make the state FFA association better for other members	
Helping to make sure all candidates were treated fairly.	
Speaking up for equality	
Doing what I believe is right, even if my friends make fun of me.	
Standing up for what I believe, even when it's unpopular to do.	
Telling the truth, even when it's not easy.	
Accepting responsibility for my part in the outcome of the nominating committee's decisions.	
Doing my best, even when I didn't like being on the nominating committee.	

After completing the questionnaire, student nominating committee members were asked four open-ended questions regarding their experience serving on the nominating committee (see table 3.2). Demographic information, including age and gender, was collected.

Table 3.2 Open – ended Questions for Student Nominating Committee Members

- 
1. What was the best part about working with the adults on the nominating committee?
  2. Did working with the nominating committee adults change your perspective about the state officer selection process? If so, how?
  3. What did you not like about working with adults?
  4. If you could give advice to the next group of adults who will serve on the nominating committee, what would it be?
- 

### **Data Collection Procedures**

#### **Content Analysis**

A content analysis was conducted on the southern region FFA by-laws in order to describe the nominating committee processes for each state, the duties of the nominating committee members, and how/why they were chosen to serve. After the initial analysis, state staff were contacted and asked to provide details describing their nominating committee processes. Three states supplied in-depth accounts of their nominating committee process, the roles of the nominating committee members, and why/how they were chosen. One state provided a website link that contributed more information to the nominating committee process and their roles but not how or why the nominating committee was chosen.

#### **Adult Nominating Committee Member Survey**

Adult nominating committee members were emailed the link to the questionnaire, and it was disseminated to 43 adult nominating committee members in February. The adults consented to the survey by reading the consent document on the first page and

clicking the arrow (appendix C.1). The link was active for two and a half weeks. After the first week, a reminder email was sent to the participants, and after two weeks, a final reminder email was sent.

### **Student Nominating Committee Member Survey**

Before the questionnaire was disseminated to the student nominating committee members, parental permission was required of those 17 years and younger. Parents were asked to sign the parental assent forms and email them to the researcher. Upon collection of the assent forms, the modified Measure of PYD questionnaire was emailed to the student members. The first page students saw was the consent page, and they gave their consent by clicking on the arrow to begin the survey (appendix D.1). The link to the questionnaire was disseminated to 29 students via email in February. The three state staff who requested to email students themselves to the remaining 20 students were asked to copy the principle investigator on the recruitment email. The questionnaire was open for two and a half weeks. After the first week, a reminder email was sent to the participants, and after two weeks, a final reminder email was sent. Data from the questionnaire and the open – ended questions were collected.

## **Data Analysis Techniques**

### **Content Analysis**

According to Fraenkel et al. (2015), a “content analysis is a technique that enables researchers to study human behavior in an indirect way through an analysis of their communications” (p. 476). They are used to supplement more direct methods of research and can be used to give researchers insight into problems or hypotheses that they can then

test by more direct methods (Fraenkel et al, 2015). The sources were state FFA bylaws, follow-up questions to state FFA staff, and open – ended questions used in the student questionnaire. The principle investigator collected and analyzed the state FFA bylaws and state staff responses, purposefully looking for similarities and differences in the documents.

### **State FFA bylaws**

Nine state FFA bylaws were retrieved from each state’s FFA website. The bylaws were analyzed in order to describe nominating committee processes in the southern FFA region.

### **Follow-up questions to state FFA staff**

Out of the nine follow up emails sent to FFA staff, three responded with personal responses, and one state staff provided a website link to that state’s nominating committee processes. These responses were compared and contrasted with the state bylaw content analysis.

### **Open – ended questions on the student questionnaire**

Creswell (2007) explains the process for qualitative data analysis is “preparing and organizing the data for analysis, then reducing the data into themes through a process of coding and condensing codes, and finally representing the data in figures, tables, or a discussion” (p. 148). After initial analysis of the student responses, the responses were analyzed and grouped according to the themes that emerged.

## **Quantitative Analysis**

Statistical analyses were conducted using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (Version 23). Statistics included descriptive statistics (e.g., frequencies, percentages, and Pearson's product-moment correlation coefficients).

## **Summary**

This mixed-methods research design was chosen for this study to provide a more detailed account of the experiences the adult and students had while serving on the nominating committee. The qualitative findings from the content analyses of the state FFA bylaws, state FFA staff personal accounts of their respective nominating committee processes, and the student responses from the open-ended questions, and the quantitative findings from the modified instruments are discussed in chapter four.

## CHAPTER IV

### FINDINGS

The purpose of the study was to determine how adult members on southern region state FFA nominating committees regarded the student members. Additionally, the study aimed to identify the relationship between two constructs of PYD, character and connection, regarding the student nominating committee members and the perceptions adults have concerning those student members. The research objectives were:

1. Describe the procedures for choosing nominating committee members and the operating processes in the states of the National FFA Organization's southern region,
2. Describe experiences as perceived by 2016 student nominating committee members,
3. Identify how 2016 southern FFA region adult nominating committee members regard student members of the nominating committee on the Inventory of Adult Attitudes and Behavior,
4. Describe the relationship between adult nominating committee members' attitudes regarding student nominating committee members and attributes of PYD students may gain from serving on a state FFA nominating committee,



5. Investigate the relationship between age and gender of adult nominating committee members as it relates to how they regard the student nominating committee members.

### **Demographic Information**

Of the 43 adults contacted, 19 completed the Inventory of Adult Attitudes and Behavior questionnaire with a response rate of 44.2%. Of the 49 FFA members contacted, 14 completed the PYD questionnaire with a response rate of 28.6%. Demographic information was collected from both adult and youth respondents (table 4.1). Adult demographic information included: the 2016 state FFA nominating committee which they served, past FFA membership, holding a past state FFA office, number of times served on a state nominating committee, age, race, and gender. The most represented state was Florida ( $n = 5$ ). Almost all of the participants were past FFA members ( $n = 17$ ), and less than half had served previously as state FFA officer ( $n = 13$ ).

Table 4.1 Adult Nominating Committee Member Demographics

Characteristic	n	%
<b>State</b>		
Florida	5	26.3
North Carolina	4	21.1
Arkansas	3	15.8
Tennessee	3	15.8
Alabama	2	10.5
Louisiana	2	10.5
<b>Age</b>		
Younger than 25	3	15.8
Between 26 – 50	11	57.9
Older than 51	5	26.3
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	13	68.4
Female	6	31.6
<b>Race</b>		
White	18	94.7
African American	1	5.3
<b>Times served</b>		
One	10	52.6
Two	7	36.8
Three	1	5.3
More than 3	1	5.3

*Note:* Adults who served on a state FFA nominating committee more than once may or may not have served on the same state’s committee.

For the FFA member demographic questions included: the state FFA nominating committee which they served, age, gender, and race were collected. The most represented state was Georgia (n = 7). Table 4.2 presents the information representing the demographics of the student respondents.

Table 4.2 Student Nominating Committee Member Demographics

Characteristic	n	%
<b>State</b>		
Georgia	7	50
Florida	2	14.3
Tennessee	2	14.3
Louisiana	1	7.1
North Carolina	1	7.1
South Carolina	1	7.1
<b>Age</b>		
17	5	35.7
18	6	42.9
19	3	21.4
<b>Gender</b>		
Male	5	35.7
Female	9	64.3
<b>Race</b>		
White	12	85.7
African American	1	7.1
Other	1	7.1

### Objective One

Objective one aimed to describe the procedures for choosing nominating committee members and the operating processes in the states of the National FFA Organization's southern region. Content analysis identified three state nominating committees composed of FFA members, agriculture teachers, and business and industry leaders. One example of this type of nominating committee process consisted of six current FFA members and six adults. Interested students completed applications that were reviewed by their respective regions, and two were chosen from each region to serve. The nominating committee coordinator had no part in choosing the students but does recruit the adult members. Adult members included one current agriculture teacher, one teacher

educator, former state FFA officers, FFA alumni representatives, state FFA Foundation representatives, State Department of Education staff members, and an FFA stakeholders. The state FFA nominating committee coordinator also attempted to promote geographic diversity among the adult members (State Staff 3, personal communication, January 11, 2017).

Three state nominating committees were composed of current high school FFA members who are led by adult consultant(s). An example of this type of nominating committee selection began with the FFA advisors. They nominated one student from their chapters, and two representatives from each of the four regions were chosen by the state FFA nominating committee coordinator. The nominating committee coordinator met with the students the day prior to state FFA convention to give them a “crash course” nominating committee training (State Staff 2 personal communications, January 25, 2017).

Two state nominating committees were composed of current FFA members, past state FFA officers, and agriculture teachers. One particular state nominating committee consisted of four current FFA advisors, four past state FFA officers, and four current FFA members. Current state officers made recommendations to the state FFA director. Potential student nominating committee members’ agriculture teachers were interviewed by the state director. Teachers were asked to serve by the state director on a volunteer basis. Past state FFA officers were selected by the state director as well. “In all cases, we make the committee equal male and female and try to include at least one minority,” (State Staff 1, personal communications, January 25, 2017).

One nominating committee was composed of the immediate past state FFA officer team and three adult consultants. In this case, the only criteria for being on this type of nominating committee was to be an immediate past state FFA officer. In this particular instance, it was the 2015 state FFA officer team (State Staff 4, personal communication, January 13, 2017).

### **Adults Utilized as Voting Members**

Five out of nine states utilize adults as a voting member of the committee. In one from a state staff personal response, the decision process begins after the candidates went home and all the interviews were complete. Taking scores into account, the committee unanimously agrees on a breakpoint to divide the candidate pool in half, and the bottom portion is no longer considered for state FFA office. The committee was asked to independently choose their top six candidates and list pros and cons for each of them on an index card and hang them on a wall under each candidate's name. After deliberations from the smaller candidate pool, the nominating committee unanimously chose the top six candidates and determined which candidate received what office. The student nominating committee members then determined who would give the report at state convention. (State Staff 1, personal communication, January 25, 2017).

### **Adults Utilized as Consultants**

Four out of nine states utilized adults as consultants, meaning they did not have a vote in the state officer selection process. One state nominating committee utilized two agriculture teachers as the adult consultants. In this example, student nominating committee members scored candidates through the rounds individually using provided

rubrics. However, the number of rounds was not specified. After the interviews, the nominating committee members were isolated individually and selected six candidates they felt should be on the team. They justified their reasons based on scores or personal observations from the rounds. After personal analysis of the scores, the members came together with a facilitator. Three at-large positions (state president, state secretary, and state reporter) were filled first. The remaining candidates were divided by district and the three district vice-presidents were elected. The nominating committee members were then sequestered until the slate was read on stage.

Another example of an adult serving in a consultant role included one state FFA nominating committee receiving a training course with the nominating committee coordinator. The nominating committee coordinator outlined the importance of the decision the students would make by encouraging them to take on a mature mindset throughout the process. The state officer candidates completed scenarios that were graded based on a rubric for each event. These include prepared public speaking, extemporaneous public speaking, FFA knowledge test, one-on-one interviews with each candidate and nominating committee member, an on-stage speech, an officer application, a mock interview with a school principal, and a mock FFA event in which they read a script that includes special guests. The students scored each interview round, and the state nominating committee coordinator entered scores from each rubric into an excel spreadsheet. The top two score became the president and secretary, and the top scores from each region became the rest of the new state FFA officers (State Staff 2, personal communications, January 25, 2017).

## **Objective Two**

Objective two aimed to describe the nominating committee experiences as perceived by the student members. In brief, student members were enthusiastic to make connections with adults but at times felt a disconnection from the adults.

### **Enthusiastic to make connections with adults**

Overall, students felt the adults were prestigious, and they had guidance and experience to offer to the nominating committee process. Because of that, the students felt their roles as nominating committee members were important and significant. Participant Four reflected, “Working with the adults made it feel as if it had a greater significance and importance.” They looked forward to working with adult in a partnership to elect state FFA officers. Participant One reiterated this by saying, “The adults in the process allowed the students on the nominating committee to make our decisions and also encouraged us to work as a team and listen to the opinions of everyone.” Students valued the opportunity to work with adults who were involved with FFA outside of the agriculture classroom. Participant Five recounted, “I enjoyed getting to see how much FFA meant to adults who weren’t agriculture teachers.” They not only valued the direction adults gave to the process, but also the knowledge adults had about the world outside of FFA, as Participant Eight thought they offered “a real world perspective.” Students also appreciated the support that came from having adults on the nominating committee. They felt the adults played a role in keeping the nominating committee process fair. Participant Five recalled, “Yes, having an adult perspective helped to ensure the process was fairly done.”

### **Disconnect from the adults**

While the students were enthusiastic to work with adults and connect with them on a partnership level, they started to feel disconnected from them at some point during the nominating committee process. At times, the students felt that adults either did not know a lot about the nominating committee process, or they did not take the process seriously enough. Participant Six explained that the adults “didn’t know a lot about FFA,” and Participant Three stated, “I don’t know if they all understood how important the process was.” Participant Three wanted the adults to “realize to the students this is one of the most important things we have ever done.”

Some students thought the nominating committee did not value their opinions. Participant Seven advised them to “listen completely to the kids on nom com. These kids see a different side of the candidates that is hard to see. This involves their social interaction from kid to kid. This is due to the fact the officers will work with students across the state.” They were also concerned the adults were not scoring the candidates fairly. Participant Four explained, “Make sure you observe everyone equally and fairly,” and Participant Ten said, “Don’t score someone high just because they may be your best friend and don’t judge someone off what you may have heard about them before (they go before) the nominating committee because it may not be true.”

### **Objective Three**

The third objective identified how 2016 southern FFA region adult nominating committee members regarded student members of the nominating committee on the Inventory of Adult Attitudes and Behavior. The most preferred style was style 3, adults



view youth as resources ( $n = 14$ ). The second most preferred style was style 2, adults view youth as recipients ( $n = 2$ ). Results of the questionnaire are displayed in Table 4.3.

Table 4.3 Adult Nominating Committee Member Preferred Approach

Preferred Approach	n
Resources	14
Recipients	2
Objects	1
Tied	2

Note: Preferred approach refers to raw score on style subscale.

#### Objective Four

The fourth objective described the relationship between adult nominating committee members' attitudes towards students and attributes of PYD students may have gained from serving on a state FFA nominating committee. It was analyzed using Pearson's correlation to describe the relationship between adult nominating committee members' preferred approach and the constructs of PYD, character and connection. No statistically significant relationship existed between the preferred approach and character; style 1 ( $r = .374, p > .05$ ), style 2 ( $r = .539, p > .05$ ), or style 3 ( $r = .726, p > .05$ ). Additionally, no statistically significant relationship existed between the preferred approaches and connection for style 1 ( $r = .198, p > .05$ ), style 2 ( $r = .55, p > .05$ ), or style 3 ( $r = .231, p > .05$ ).

#### Objective Five

The fifth objective investigated the relationship between age and gender of adult nominating committee members as it relates to how they regard the student members. Pearson's product – moment correlation was utilized to describe the relationship between

age and preferred style. No statistically significant relationship existed between age and style one ( $r = .223$ ,  $p > .05$ ), style two ( $r = .342$ ,  $p > .05$ ), or style three ( $r = .549$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

No statistically significant relationship existed between gender and style one ( $r = .266$ ,  $p > .05$ ), style two ( $r = .653$ ,  $p > .05$ ), or style three ( $r = .672$ ,  $p > .05$ ).

## CHAPTER V

### DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The purpose of the study was to determine how adult members on southern region state FFA nominating committees regarded the student members. Additionally, the study aimed to identify the relationship between two constructs of PYD, character and connection, regarding the student nominating committee members and the perceptions adults have concerning those student members. The research objectives were:

1. Describe the procedures for choosing nominating committee members and the operating processes in the states of the National FFA Organization's southern region,
2. Describe experiences as perceived by 2016 student nominating committee members,
3. Identify how 2016 southern FFA region adult nominating committee members regard student members of the nominating committee on the Inventory of Adult Attitudes and Behavior,
4. Describe the relationship between adult nominating committee members' attitudes regarding student nominating committee members and attributes of PYD students may gain from serving on a state FFA nominating committee,

5. Investigate the relationship between age and gender of adult nominating committee members as it relates to how they regard the student nominating committee members.

### **Discussion**

On all 2016 southern region state FFA nominating committees included in this study, students were utilized as voting members. Adults served in one of two roles: a voting member or as a consultant. The majority of the adults' scores from the Inventory of Adult Attitudes and Behavior instrument indicated they preferred to work with students as resources. Students were enthusiastic to work with adults and learn from them. During the process, however, most of the students started feeling like the adults did not appreciate their input, care about the process as much as they should have, or have a strong FFA knowledge base. The students and the adults became disconnected at some point during the process.

### **Objective One**

Objective one sought to describe the processes of the states in the southern FFA region. To date, there is no research the degree to which states model the national FFA nominating committee process. This study identified that four states model their processes after the national process in terms of using adult consultants instead of adults having a voting role. National FFA nominating committee members felt encouraged and capable of doing a good job in regards to electing a team of national FFA officers, and a large portion of that confidence came from the adult consultants (Bruce & Ricketts, 2007). While there is value in each state in the southern region adhering to their own

nominating committee process because each state FFA association is unique, there is value in modelling state processes after the national nominating committee process because those students felt empowered by the adults who worked with them.

## **Objective Two**

Almost all of the students indicated excitement about working with adults, making connections with them, and learning about the process from an adult perspective. However, somewhere in the process, the students became frustrated with the “lack of passion” the adults had. On one hand, they felt the adults did not understand how important the process was, and on the other, they felt like the adults did not care about student members’ input. Interestingly, almost all adults indicated they regarded youth as resources. Most of the students, however, felt at some point the adults had little regard for their opinions at all.

Lofquist (1989) indicated that students and adults should learn the skills and attitudes necessary to shared decision making. He further explains that policies and administrative practices may have to change in order to accommodate those newly acquired skills and attitudes. On southern region state FFA nominating committees, the disconnection between the student members and the adult members may have been due to the fact that the nominating committee process did not lend itself to a youth-adult partnership where adult nominating committee members regarded the student members as resources.

### **Objective Three**

William Lofquist (1989, p. 50) wrote,

“If we are interested in promoting personal growth and increased organizational effectiveness, it is more effective to create genuine experiences wherein people are engaged as resources, seeing personal growth as a byproduct, than by an attempt to produce personal growth as a direct objective.”

The National FFA Organization’s mission statement is to “promote premiere leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education” (National FFA Organization, 2015b, para. 1). Nineteen adult nominating committee members completed the Inventory of Adult Attitudes and Behavior questionnaire, and 84.2% scored Style 3 as their preferred approach, which is “young people viewed as resources.” This view of youth indicates most of the adults agreed that youth and adults must work together on equal terms on state FFA nominating committees to select a team of state FFA officers, and it also helps to confirm part of the mission statement, to promote personal growth.

Only two of the participants preferred Style 2 where youth are viewed as recipients. Lofquist (1989) explained the objective of adults who view youth as recipients is for the youth’s personal growth, but the difference is that the goal of those who view youth as *resources* is to increase organizational effectiveness. One person scored highest in viewing youth as objects. While this view takes the stance that the adults are in charge, and youth are to conform to what the adults want, the objective is the same as recipients, to promote the personal growth of youth. According to Lofquist (1989), when adults consider youth as resources and treat them as partners, the objective becomes increased

organizational effectiveness, thereby producing personal growth in youth as the by product.

#### **Objective Four**

Research objective four sought to determine the relationship between style preferences of adult members and the presence or absence of character and connection. Based on the results of Pearson's product – moment coefficient, there was not a statistically significant relationship between the variables. However, this finding is significant in terms of how and why state staff choose nominating committee members. One of the principles of PYD is that a positive developmental trajectory is enabled when youth are embedded in relationships, contexts, and ecologies that nurture their development (Benson, Scales, Hamilton, & Sesma, 2006), and a guiding principle of youth-adult partnerships is adults can overcome negative attitudes and misinformation about youth when they join with youth to address community concerns (Camino, 2000). Regardless of how adults view youth, youth-adult partnerships are formed, thus fostering an environment for PYD. Adult nominating committee members or adult consultants who provide FFA members a chance to further their potential for personal growth by making decisions alongside of the adults have the opportunity to aid in PYD.

#### **Objective Five**

Objective five sought to investigate the correlation between age and gender of adult nominating committee members as it relates to how they view the student members. Because there was no statistically significant relationship between these variables, it can

be concluded in this sample that there is no relationship between age and gender and how adults work with students on nominating committees, regardless of style preference.

## **Recommendations**

### **Research Recommendations**

Recommendations for research can be drawn from this study. First, more research should be conducted in regards to the effectiveness of state FFA nominating committee processes. Some state nominating committees in the southern region chose to compose their nominating committees of high school FFA members, while other states choose to include adults in the decision making process. In addition to that, research should be conducted concerning how and why states run their nominating committees. If national FFA nominating committee members perceived themselves as confident and competent, then state FFA nominating committees should assess their processes to identify how student nominating committee members feel about working with adults. Some of the southern region states model their nominating committee process as closely as they can to the National FFA nominating committee process, while other states choose to take bits and pieces of it and fit it to their needs. For example, one state conducts a group interview, whereas the national process does not include one.

To date, there has been little research, if any, that specifically targets PYD as it relates to state FFA nominating committees. More PYD research should be conducted on state FFA nominating committees not only measuring character and connection, but also the remaining Cs, competence, caring, and confidence. Research indicates if the 5 Cs are occurring happening in a youth centered event, PYD has the potential to flourish (Benson et al. 2009, Eccles & Gootman 2002, Lerner et al. 2005, Phelps et al. 2009).



Another research recommendation would be for researchers in youth-adult partnerships to explore the Y-APs that are made on state FFA nominating committees. Benson, Scales, Hamilton, and Sesma (2006) explain that PYD is supported when youth participate in nutrient-rich relationships. If adults regard FFA members as resources, then there is potential for the adults to value student input, therefore contributing to a Y-AP. Research that has been conducted on 4-H programs in terms of Y-APs explains the design of the Y-APs allows for guidance and coaching by the adults while enabling youths to be innovative and determine how the tasks get done (Anderson & Sandmann, 2009).

### **Practitioner Recommendations**

In addition to recommendations related to research, the study provided recommendations that are applicable for practice. First, state nominating committee coordinators should evaluate the student nominating committee members' satisfaction of working with adults to select state officers. One respondent gave the advice, "Make sure that the students have the opportunity to lead the process and truly make this a student lead organization." The National FFA promotes itself as student-led, and all activities within the organization should strive to put student needs first.

State nominating committee coordinators should review their nominating committee processes as they are written in their bylaws. If there is a disconnection between the bylaws and how the process is actually run, changes should be made to the both the process and bylaws to reflect transparency of the process.

Serving on a state FFA nominating committee has the potential to establish Y-APs and promote PYD. This research contributed to the knowledge base, but there is much more to be done.

## REFERENCES

- Anderson, K. S., & Sandmann, L. (2009). Toward a model of empowering practices in youth-adult partnerships. *Journal of Extension*, 47(2), 1-8. Retrieved from [https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Lorilee\\_Sandmann2/publication/228477713\\_Toward\\_a\\_Model\\_of\\_Empowering\\_Practices\\_in\\_Youth-Adult\\_Partnerships/links/5485db960cf289302e28585c.pdf](https://www.researchgate.net/profile/Lorilee_Sandmann2/publication/228477713_Toward_a_Model_of_Empowering_Practices_in_Youth-Adult_Partnerships/links/5485db960cf289302e28585c.pdf)
- Benson, P. L., Scales, P. C., Hamilton, S. F., & Sesma, A. (2006). Positive youth development: Theory, research, and applications. John Wiley & Sons, Inc. doi:10.1002/9780470147658.chpsy0116
- Bowers, E. P., Li, Y., Kiely, M. K., Brittan, A., Lerner, J. V., & Lerner, R. M. (2010). The five Cs model of positive youth development: A longitudinal analysis of confirmatory factor structure and measurement invariance. *Journal of youth and adolescence*, 39(7), 720-735. doi:10.1007/s10964-010-9530-9
- Bruce, J., & Ricketts, K. (2007). Evaluation of the National FFA Nominating Committee Training. *Journal of Leadership Education*, volume 6, (1), p. 59. Retrieved from [http://www.leadershipeducators.org/Resources/Documents/jole/2007\\_winter/Jole\\_6\\_1.pdf#page=71](http://www.leadershipeducators.org/Resources/Documents/jole/2007_winter/Jole_6_1.pdf#page=71)
- Camino, L. (2005). Pitfalls and promising practices of youth–adult partnerships: An evaluator's reflections. *Journal of Community Psychology*, 33(1), 75-85. Retrieved from <http://fyi.uwex.edu/youthadultpartnership/files/2015/04/Camino-Pitfalls-and-promising.pdf>
- Camino, L. A. (2000). Youth-adult partnerships: Entering new territory in community work and research. *Applied Developmental Science*, 4(S1), 11-20. Retrieved from <http://fyi.uwex.edu/youthadultpartnership/files/2015/02/Youth-Adult-Partnerships-2.pdf>
- Cargo, M., Grams, G. D., Ottoson, J. M., Ward, P., & Green, L. W. (2003). Empowerment as fostering positive youth development and citizenship. *American Journal of Health Behavior*, 27(1), S66-S79. Abstract retrieved from <http://www.ingentaconnect.com/content/png/ajhb/2003/00000027/a00100s1/art00007>

- Carnegie Council on Adolescent Development. (1995). *Great Transitions: preparing adolescents for a new century*. New York, NY: Carnegie Corporation New York.
- Creswell, J.W. (2007) *Qualitative inquiry and research design: Choosing among five approaches* (pp.59 - . Thousand Oaks, California: Sage Publications, Inc.
- Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Christian, L. M. (2014). *Internet, phone, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: the tailored design method*. (p. 332). John Wiley & Sons.
- Eccles, J., & Gootman, J. A. (Eds.). (2002). *Community programs to promote youth development*. National Academies Press. Retrieved from <https://www.nap.edu/read/10022/chapter/7#134>
- Fraenkel, J., Wallen, N., & Hyun, H. (2015). *How to design and evaluate research in education* (9<sup>th</sup> ed.) (pp. 555-556). New York, NY: McGraw-Hill Education.
- Gilliam F. D. Jr, & Bales, S. N. (2001). Strategic frame analysis: Reframing America's youth. *Center for Communications and Community*. Retrieved from <https://escholarship.org/uc/item/5sk7r6gk#page-1>
- GuideStar. (2017). Directory of charities and nonprofit organizations. Retrieved from <https://www.guidestar.org/nonprofit-directory/human-services/youth-development/2.aspx>
- Indiana University – Purdue University Indianapolis. (2016). National FFA records, 1916 – 2008. Retrieved from <http://www-lib.iupui.edu/special/ffa>
- Jones, K. R., & Perkins, D. F. (2006). Youth and adult perceptions of their relationships within community-based youth programs. *Youth & Society*, 38 (1), 90-109. doi: 10.1177/0044118X06287860
- Lerner, R. M. (2005). Promoting positive youth development: Theoretical and empirical bases. In *White paper prepared for the workshop on the science of adolescent health and development, national research council/institute of medicine. Washington, DC: National Academies of Science*. Retrieved from <http://ase.tufts.edu/iaryd/documents/pubpromotingpositive.pdf>
- Lerner, R. M., Almerigi, J. B., Theokas, C., & Lerner, J. V. (2005). Positive youth development a view of the issues. *The journal of early adolescence*, 25(1), 10-16. Retrieved from <http://journals.sagepub.com/doi/pdf/10.1177/0272431604273211>

- Lerner, R. M., Lerner, J. V., Almerigi, J. B., Theokas, C., Phelps, E., Gestsdottir, S., & Smith, L. M. (2005). Positive Youth Development, Participation in community youth development programs, and community contributions of fifth-grade adolescents findings from the first wave of the 4-H study of Positive Youth Development. *The Journal of Early Adolescence*, 25(1), 17-71.  
doi:10.1177/0272431604272461
- Lerner, R.M., Lerner J.V., & Phelps E. (2008). The positive development of youth: Report of the findings from the first four years of the 4-H study of positive youth development. Medford, MA: Tufts University Office of Publications.
- Lerner, R. M., & Lerner, J. V. (2009). Report of the findings from the first six years of the 4-H study of positive youth development. Retrieved from <https://ase.tufts.edu/iaryd/documents/4HPYDStudyWave7.pdf>
- Lofquist, W. A. (1989). The spectrum of attitudes. *The technology of prevention workbook: A leadership development program* (pp. 44-50). Tuscan, AZ: Associates for Youth Development.
- National FFA Organization. (2015a). FFA history. Retrieved from <https://www.ffa.org/about/what-is-ffa/ffa-history>
- National FFA Organization. (2015b). FFA mission & motto. Retrieved from <https://www.ffa.org/about/who-we-are/mission-motto>
- National FFA Organization. (2015c). National FFA Organization bylaws. Retrieved from [https://www.ffa.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/about\\_bylaws.pdf](https://www.ffa.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/about_bylaws.pdf)
- National FFA Organization. (2015d). National officer selection process. Retrieved from [https://www.ffa.org/MyResourceDocuments/no\\_selection\\_process\\_handbook.pdf#page=36](https://www.ffa.org/MyResourceDocuments/no_selection_process_handbook.pdf#page=36)
- National FFA Organization. (2015e). National officer selection process. Retrieved from [https://www.ffa.org/MyResourceDocuments/no\\_selection\\_process\\_handbook.pdf](https://www.ffa.org/MyResourceDocuments/no_selection_process_handbook.pdf)
- National FFA Organization. (2015f). Official FFA manual. Retrieved from [https://www.ffa.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/2016\\_official\\_ffa\\_manual.pdf](https://www.ffa.org/SiteCollectionDocuments/2016_official_ffa_manual.pdf)
- National FFA Organization. (2015g). FFA structure. Retrieved from <https://www.ffa.org/about/what-is-ffa/ffa-structure>
- National FFA Organization. (2015h). What is FFA? Retrieved from <https://www.ffa.org/about/what-is-ffa>

- Phelps, E., Zimmerman, S., Warren, A. A., Jelicic, H., von Eye, A. & Lerner, R. M. (2009). The structure and developmental course of positive youth development (PYD) in early adolescence: Implications for theory and practice. *Journal of Applied Developmental Psychology, 30*(5), 571-584.
- Robinson, A. M., Esters, L. T., Dotterer, A., McKee, R., & Tucker, M. (2016). An exploratory study of the five Cs model of positive youth development among Indiana 4-H youth. *Journal of Youth Development, 7*(1), 82-98. Retrieved from <http://jyd.pitt.edu/ojs/jyd/article/view/154/140>
- Roth, J. L., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2003). What exactly is a youth development program? Answers from research and practice. *Applied developmental science, 7*(2), 94-103.
- Roth, J. L., & Brooks-Gunn, J. (2003a). What is a youth development program? Identification and defining principles. In F. Jacobs, D. Wertlieb, & R. M. Lerner (Eds.), *Enhancing the life chances of youth and families: Public service systems and public policy perspectives: Vol. 2 Handbook of applied developmental science: Promoting positive child, adolescent, and family development through research, policies, and programs* (pp. 197-223). Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage. 111. Retrieved from [http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S1532480XADS0702\\_6](http://dx.doi.org/10.1207/S1532480XADS0702_6)
- Wheeler, W., & Edlebeck, C. (2006). Leading, learning, and unleashing potential: Youth leadership and civic engagement. *New Directions for Youth Development, 2006*(109), 89-97. doi:10.1002/yd.156
- Zeldin, S., Camino, L., & Mook, C. (2005). The adoption of innovation in youth organizations: Creating the conditions for youth–adult partnerships. *Journal of Community Psychology, 33*(1), 121-135. doi:10.1002/jcop.20044
- Zeldin, S., Larson, R., Camino, L., & O'Connor, C. (2005). Intergenerational relationships and partnerships in community programs: Purpose, practice, and directions for research. *Journal of Community Psychology, 33*(1), 1-10. doi:10.1002/jcop.20042

APPENDIX A  
PARENTAL CONSENT DOCUMENTS

**Mississippi State University  
Informed Consent Form for Participation in Research**

---

**Title of Research Study: Determining Adult perceptions of Youth on Southern Region FFA Nominating Committees**

**Study Site:** Mississippi State University

**Researchers:** Emily Keeton, Mississippi State University

**Purpose**

The purpose of this research is to determine how adult FFA nominating committee members view working with student members.

**Procedures**

If you participate in this research, you will be asked to complete a survey about adult attitudes towards youth as it relates to FFA nominating committees. It will take about 30 minutes to complete.

**Risks or Discomforts**

Confidentiality will be maintained, but anonymity is not guaranteed.

**Benefits**

Participating in this research will provide valuable information on the nominating committee process and the dynamics by which it operates between FFA members and adult members.

**Confidentiality**

After the survey is completed, the only person who will have access to it is the principle investigator. Records will be kept on a password-protected computer.

\*Please note that these records will be held by a state entity and therefore are subject to disclosure if required by law. Research information may be shared with the MSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and others who are responsible for ensuring compliance with laws and regulations related to research, including people on behalf of Mississippi State University. The information from the research may be published for scientific purposes; however, your identity will not be given out.

Note that Qualtrics has specific privacy policies of its own. You should be aware that these web services may be able to link your responses to your ID in ways that are not bound by this consent form and the data confidentiality procedures used in this study. If you have concerns you should consult these services directly.

**Questions**



Page 1 of 2  
Version: 1/4/2017

Figure A.1 Parental Consent for Survey



If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact Emily Keeton at [emk212@msstate.edu](mailto:emk212@msstate.edu) or Dr. Laura Greenhaw at [laura.l.greenhaw@msstate.edu](mailto:laura.l.greenhaw@msstate.edu).

For questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or to discuss problems, express concerns or complaints, request information, or offer input, please feel free to contact the MSU Research Compliance Office by phone at 662-325-3994, by e-mail at [irb@research.msstate.edu](mailto:irb@research.msstate.edu), or on the web at <http://orc.msstate.edu/humansubjects/participant/>.

**Voluntary Participation**

Please understand that your **participation is voluntary**. Your **refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss** of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You **may discontinue your participation** at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.

If you decide to participate, your completion of the research procedures indicates your consent. Please keep this form for your records.

Click the arrow to continue to the survey, or close your internet browser to exit.

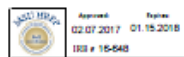


Figure A.1 (continued)

APPENDIX B  
EMAILS TO STATE FFA STAFF, ADULT NOMINATING COMMITTEE  
MEMBERS, AND STUDENT NOMINATING  
COMMITTEE MEMBERS

Dear State FFA Staff Member,

I am Emily Keeton, a graduate student at Mississippi State University studying agriculture and extension education. When I was in high school, I participated in FFA, holding many chapter offices and serving as a Regional FFA Officer. In college, I served as a State FFA Officer and was a member of the 2012 National FFA Nominating Committee. Following graduation, I taught high school agriculture for one year, before pursuing a master's degree. Now, I work as a graduate assistant with Dr. Carla Jagger in the Teaching Methods in Agricultural and Human Sciences class at Mississippi State University.

I am conducting my thesis research on southern state FFA nominating committees. More specifically, I am investigating how adults and FFA members work together to elect a team of state FFA officers. Through this research, I hope to better understand how adults and FFA members work together and what impact that interaction has on student development. I am seeking your assistance in identifying and contacting research subject by asking your permission to receive the 2016 state FFA nominating committee's contact information. If you choose to assist me, please send me the names of your state's 2016 nominating committee members, both adults and students, along with their current contact information, by February 13, 2017.

Thank you so much! I look forward to hearing from you.

Emily Keeton



Figure B.1 Recruitment email for state FFA staff

Dear 2016 State FFA Nom Com Member,

I am Emily Keeton, a graduate student at Mississippi State University studying agriculture and extension education. When I was in high school, I participated in FFA, holding many chapter offices and serving as a Regional FFA Officer. In college, I served as a State FFA Officer and was a member of the 2012 National FFA Nominating Committee. Following graduation, I taught high school agriculture for one year, before pursuing a master's degree. Now, I work as a graduate assistant with Dr. Carla Jagger in the Teaching Methods in Agricultural and Human Sciences class at Mississippi State University.

I am conducting my thesis research on southern state FFA nominating committees. More specifically, I am investigating how adults and FFA members work together to elect a team of state FFA officers. Through this research, I hope to better understand how adults and FFA members work together and what impact that interaction has on student development. If you choose to assist me, please follow this link \_\_\_\_\_ and complete the survey by February 20, 2017.

Thank you so much! I look forward to hearing from you.

Emily Keeton



Figure B.2 Recruitment email for adult nominating committee members

Dear FFA member,

I am Emily Keeton, a graduate student at Mississippi State University studying agriculture and extension education. When I was in high school, I was involved in my local FFA chapter by holding many chapter offices and serving as a Regional FFA Officer. When I was in college, I served my state association as a State FFA Officer and was a member of the 2012 National FFA Nominating Committee. As you can tell, I was all about FFA!

Because of my involvement with FFA, I decided to research how adults view FFA members on state FFA nominating committees. Basically, I want to know how adults and FFA members work together to elect state FFA officers.

Because you served on a 2016 state FFA nominating committee, you have been selected to participate in my research. If you choose to contribute to my study, you will be emailed a link to a survey that will take about 30 minutes to complete. Attached you will find an assent form for you to complete, and you will find a parental consent form for your parent or guardian to complete.

If you want to take part in this research, you and your parent or guardian should complete **BOTH** forms by February 20, 2017. Only then will you be emailed the link to the survey.

I look forward to hearing from you!

Emily Keeton



Figure B.3 Recruitment email for student nominating committee members

APPENDIX C  
ADULT CONSENT AND INSTRUMENT

The image shows a screenshot of a digital consent form. At the top, there is a dark red header bar containing three logos and their corresponding text. The first logo is the Mississippi State University Extension logo, followed by the text "MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY... EXTENSION". The second logo is the Mississippi State University MS Agricultural and Forestry Experiment Station logo, followed by the text "MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY... MS AGRICULTURAL AND FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION". The third logo is the Mississippi State University Division of Agriculture, Forestry and Veterinary Medicine logo, followed by the text "MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY... DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY AND VETERINARY MEDICINE". Below the header, the main text of the consent form reads: "Thank you for your willingness to participate in this study. The following questions will ask you to reflect on your experiences serving on the 2016 state FFA nominating committee. On the next page, you will find an informed consent document telling you about the research and your rights as a participant. If you agree to participate, you will continue on from that page and complete the questionnaire. We appreciate your assistance with this research. Please click the arrow to continue." In the bottom right corner of the page, there is a dark red button with a white double arrow symbol ">>".

Figure C.1 Adult Instrument Consent



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
EXTENSION

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND  
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY  
AND VETERINARY MEDICINE

Title of Research Study: Determining Adult perceptions of Youth on Southern Region FFA Nominating Committees

Study Site: Mississippi State University

Researcher: Emily Keeton, Mississippi State University

#### Purpose

The purpose of this research is to determine how adult FFA nominating committee members view working with student members.

#### Procedures

If you participate in this research, you will be asked to complete a survey about adult attitudes towards youth as it relates to FFA nominating committees. It will take about 30 minutes to complete.

#### Risks or Discomforts

Confidentiality will be maintained, but anonymity is not guaranteed.

#### Benefits

Participating in this research will provide valuable information on the nominating committee process and the dynamics by which it operates between FFA members and adult members.

#### Confidentiality

After the survey is completed, the only person who will have access to it is the principle investigator. Records will be kept on a password-protected computer.

\*Please note that these records will be held by a state entity and therefore are subject to disclosure if required by law. Research information may be shared with the MSU Institutional Review Board (IRB) and the Office for Human Research Protections (OHRP) and others who are responsible for ensuring compliance with laws and regulations related to research, including people on behalf of Mississippi State University. The information from the research may be published for scientific purposes; however, your identity will not be given out.

Figure C.1 (continued)



Note that Qualtrics has specific privacy policies of its own. You should be aware that these web services may be able to link your responses to your ID in ways that are not bound by this consent form and the data confidentiality procedures used in this study. If you have concerns you should consult these services directly.

#### Questions

If you have any questions about this research project, please feel free to contact Emily Keeton at [emk212@msstate.edu](mailto:emk212@msstate.edu) or Dr. Laura Greenhaw at [laura.l.greenhaw@msstate.edu](mailto:laura.l.greenhaw@msstate.edu).

For questions regarding your rights as a research participant, or to discuss problems, express concerns or complaints, request information, or offer input, please feel free to contact the MSU Research Compliance Office by phone at 662-325-3994, by e-mail at [irb@research.msstate.edu](mailto:irb@research.msstate.edu), or on the web at <http://orc.msstate.edu/humansubjects/participant/>.

#### Voluntary Participation

Please understand that your **participation is voluntary**. Your **refusal to participate will involve no penalty or loss** of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You **may discontinue your participation** at any time without penalty or loss of benefits.

Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.

If you decide to participate, **your completion of the research procedures indicates your consent**. Please keep this form for your records.

Click the arrow to continue to the survey, or close your internet browser to exit.



Figure C.1 (continued)



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
EXTENSION

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND  
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY  
AND VETERINARY MEDICINE

Directions: Please reflect on your experience(s) serving on a state FFA nominating committee. As you read each statement, please select a number from the opinion scale. Numbers from the lower end of the scale indicate that the statement is unlike the way you approach things. Numbers from the upper end of the scale indicate you use an approach similar to the statement.

	Never my approach 1	Seldom my approach 2	Sometimes my approach 3	Often my approach 4	Always my approach 5
1. As a nominating committee member, I engaged FFA student nominating committee members in making decisions because I thought it would encourage personal growth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. On the nominating committee, it was most appropriate that adults nominating committee members determined what the duties for the student members would be.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Student nominating committee members had a vantage point that was valuable for evaluating the successes and failures of the nominating process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Training for the nominating committee should teach adult members how to encourage student members to accept state FFA's expectations and processes for the nominating committee as the state FFA staff designed them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Adult nominating committee members shared carefully selected management roles with student members who were ready to learn from the experience, under close adult supervision.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Student nominating committee members were encouraged to assume leadership responsibility within the youth/adult partnership in carrying out the nominating process.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. On the state FFA nominating committee, adults made the decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. I believe that allowing student members to participate on the nominating committee can open valuable learning opportunities for them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. As an adult nominating committee member, I engaged student members in making decisions as soon as I could.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Asking the student nominating committee members to review adult-determined plans will communicate to them the adult members respected them.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
11. Adult nominating committee members were in the best position to evaluate the successes and failures of the nominating committee.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure C.2 Adult Instrument





Please identify the 2016 state FFA nominating committee you served.

Are you a past FFA member?

Are you a past state FFA officer?

Why were you chosen to serve on the 2016 state FFA nominating committee?

How many times have you served on a state FFA nominating committee?

How old are you?

Figure C.2 (continued)

Please identify your race from the drop down menu.

---

Please identify your gender

Male

Female

Figure C.2 (continued)

APPENDIX D  
STUDENT INSTRUMENT



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
EXTENSION

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
MS. AGRICULTURAL AND  
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY  
AND VETERINARY MEDICINE

Dear FFA member,

I am conducting a research study about how adults and FFA members work together on state FFA nominating committees. You were chosen because you served on your state's nominating committee in 2016. If you decide that you want to be part of this study, you will be asked to complete a survey that asks questions about your time serving on the state FFA nominating committee. It will take approximately 30 minutes. Your responses will help me understand what leadership skills you attained or enhanced as a result of serving on the nominating committee.

This survey will ask questions that will require you to reflect on service to your state FFA nominating committee and really think about how your time was spent. Because of that, there may be questions that could be uncomfortable to answer. Please know your answers will be kept **confidential**.

By taking part in this study, you will be giving valuable, first-hand information about how FFA members feel when they work with adults on state FFA nominating committees and identifying important leadership skills FFA members can enhance by serving on state FFA nominating committees.

When I am finished with this study, I will report what I discovered, but it will not include your name or that you were in the study.

You do not have to be in this study if you do not want to be. If you want, you may also decide to stop once this study has begun.

Please take all the time you need to read through this document and decide whether you would like to participate in this research study.

If you decide to participate, your completion of the research procedures indicates your consent.

Click the arrow to continue to the survey, or close your internet browser to exit.

Figure D.1 Student assent



Thinking about your experience on the nominating committee, how much do you agree with the following?

	Strongly disagree	Disagree	Not Sure	Agree	Strongly agree
1. The adults gave me help and support when I needed it.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. I had meaningful conversations with the adults on the nominating committee.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. I felt useful and important on the nominating committee.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. The adult nominating committee members really cared about me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. I received a lot of encouragement from the adult members on the nominating committee.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. The adult nominating committee members pushed me to be the best I could be.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Serving on the nominating committee gave me many chances to make my state association better.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. The adult nominating committee members made me feel important.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure D.2 Student instrument



9. The adult nominating committee members listened to what I had to say.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. I felt like I mattered to the adults on the nominating committee.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
					<input type="button" value="&gt;&gt;"/>

Figure D.2 (continued)



How important was each of the following to you when you served on the nominating committee?

	Not important	Somewhat important	Not sure	Quite important	Extremely important
1. Getting to know people who are of a different race than I am.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
2. Helping other people.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
3. Helping my association be a better program to be involved in.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
4. Giving my time and talents to make the state FFA association better for other members.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
5. Helping to make sure all candidates were treated fairly.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
6. Speaking up for equality	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
7. Doing what I believe is right, even if my friends make fun of me.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
8. Standing up for what I believe, even when it's unpopular to do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
9. Telling the truth, even when it's not easy.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
10. Accepting responsibility for my part in the outcome of the nominating committee's decisions.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Figure D.2 (continued)

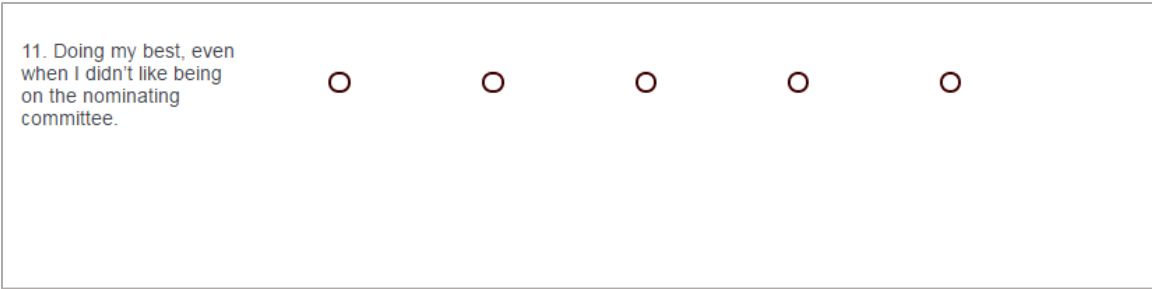


Figure D.2 (continued)



MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY...  
EXTENSION

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY...  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND  
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION

MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY...  
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY  
AND VETERINARY MEDICINE

What was the best part about working with adults on the nominating committee?


Did working with adults change your perspective about the state officer selection process? If so, how?

What did you not like about working with adults?

If you could give advice to the next group of adults who will serve on the nominating committee, what would it be?

>>

Figure D.2 (continued)

 **MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
EXTENSION**    **MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
MS AGRICULTURAL AND  
FORESTRY EXPERIMENT STATION**    **MISSISSIPPI STATE UNIVERSITY™  
DIVISION OF AGRICULTURE, FORESTRY  
AND VETERINARY MEDICINE**

Please identify the state FFA nominating committee you served.

---

What was your age when you served on the state FFA nominating committee?

---

What is your gender?

---

Please identify your race from the drop down menu.

Figure D.2 (continued)

Hidden test to allow template to find last page in document