A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCES THAT MOTIVATE

YOUNG PEOPLE TO VOLUNTEER AS 4-H CAMP TEEN LEADERS

by

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Liberty University

A Dissertation Presented in Partial Fulfillment

Of the Requirements for the Degree

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Abstract

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences that motivate teenagers to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. The theories guiding this study were Lerner and Overton's relational developmental systems theory (RDST) and Ryan and Deci's self-determination theory (SDT). They relate to the developmental connection between an individual and the surrounding context and internal and external influences as motivating factors, respectively. The two theories together informed this study which sought to answer the central research question "What lived experiences do teens identify that motivate them to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders?" This study followed a qualitative, phenomenological design to capture descriptions from the teenage perspective. Sixteen 4-H Camp teen leaders, in at minimum, their second year of service, provided data through interviews and observations during 4-H Camp. Five of these participants also provided data through focus group participation. Analysis through horizonalization using both in vivo and focused coding yielded findings that add to the literature on the subject. Findings indicated that the three primary reasons teenagers volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia are the 4-H Camp culture, connections with others, and feelings toward contribution.

Keywords: 4-H Camp, 4-H Camp teen leaders, relational developmental systems theory, self-determination theory, motivation, contribution, positive youth development

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List of Abbreviations

American Camping Association (ACA)

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Positive Youth Development (PYD)

Relational Developmental Systems Theory (RDST)

Self-Determination Theory (SDT)

Sub-question (SQ)

Youth-Adult Partnership (YAP)

CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

Overview

4-H Camping in Virginia depends on a unique youth-adult partnership where teenagers in leadership roles work alongside adult volunteers and paid staff to provide quality camping experiences for younger youth (Garst, 2004; Pratt, 2021). However, little is known about what motivates them to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences that motivate teenagers to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. Motivations change throughout a lifetime as people at different stages of life prioritize their time and energy differently (Dunlop et al., 2017; Kanfer & Fletcher, 2020; Yamashita et al., 2019). Studies such as Bode's (2017) attention to teen motivation, Nolen et al.'s (2015) focus on situational motivation and engagement, and McGuire et al.'s (2016) exploration of youth motivation in program participation illustrate the foray into understanding teen motivation. Related to 4-H Camping, studies about teen leaders' insights regarding their growth at camp (Bird & Subramaniam, 2018) and transformative leadership experiences of 4-H Camp teen leaders (Femrite & Flatt, 2016) show what teens gain from their volunteer contributions. There is a clear void of research linking teen motivation and 4-H Camp teen leadership. Femrite and Flatt (2016) suggested that nurturing an early interest may influence future motivation toward leadership. Along the same lines, Annesi (2020) raised the question of how a young person's experiences as a camper, and the benefits derived from them, may influence future camp leadership. This study adds to the 4-H Camping literature. It may help practitioners, parents, and youth themselves better understand the experiences that motivate the young people in this study to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. This knowledge may help facilitate similar experiences for 4-H youth in the future. It also helps situate the understanding

of teen motivation to volunteer in the context of Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory (SDT) and Lerner and Overton's (2008) relational developmental systems theory (RDST). This chapter provides background information about 4-H Camp teen leadership, the theories which frame this study, the significance of the study, and the research questions for this study.

Background

This study focused on exploring the experiences of young people that motivate them to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. 4-H Camping in Virginia has a rich history dating back over 100 years. 4-H is the largest youth development program in the United States (National 4-H Council, 2020a) and worldwide (Turner & Houglum, 2017), with one of the major 4-H delivery modes being 4-H camping (Turner & Houglum, 2017). This study is situated within a rich historical basis for teen leadership development in the 4-H camping program as well as in other 4-H delivery modes. The study also has social and theoretical relevance in relating the topic to youth-adult partnerships (YAP) and developmental experiences within 4-H camping.

Historical Context

Organized camping programs in the United States began in the latter half of the 1800s with an emphasis on recreational pursuits that shifted around 1920 to a more educational approach (Ramsing, 2007). 4-H camping in Virginia started in Loudon County in 1917 (Garst, 2004) with the first 4-H Center built in Jamestown in 1928 (Jamestown 4-H Center, 2017). It has evolved through the years as a safe, supportive environment where youth often develop life skills and experience behavioral changes (Garst & Bruce, 2003). The current structure of Virginia 4-H camps involves a leadership model with paid summer staff working with 4-H Agents and adult and teen volunteers to provide instruction, supervision, and support to campers (Pratt, 2021). Depending on the particular state or region of the country, the teens serving in leadership roles at

4-H Camp may be referred to as teen leaders (Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University [VPI&SU], 2021a), junior camp counselors (University of Nebraska-Lincoln, 2021), camp counselors or teen counselors (The Ohio State University, 2021; University of Georgia Extension, 2021), or youth counselors (Regents of the University of California, 2021a). Regardless of the specific term used, they fall under the category of volunteer staff (Regents of the University of California, 2021a; The Ohio State University, 2021; Meadows & Garst, 2001). For simplicity, the term teen leader is used exclusively in this document.

Leadership is a skill that is emphasized in 4-H and develops over extended involvement with the 4-H program (Kress, 2014; National 4-H Council, 2020b). Carver and Enfield (2006) discussed the 4-H leadership growth process for youth belonging to a 4-H Club but expressed that the process is mirrored in other 4-H pursuits such as afterschool programs and camps. They detailed a process of starting with small leadership roles and building to more and more responsibility with age to the point where a teenager first assists adults in providing leadership to a program and then takes the primary role of teen leader with the adult assisting (Carver & Enfield, 2006). This youth-adult partnership (YAP) exemplifies teens taking ownership and decision-making responsibilities and becoming as much or more in charge of the activity taking place as the adults involved (Henness & Ball, 2019). This leadership model translates to 4-H Camp where youth gain more leadership experience within the program as counselors-in-training followed by becoming teen leaders, often working in partnership with more experienced teens initially and taking on more responsibility as they mature (Meadows & Garst, 2001).

Paid camp staff are frequently influenced to seek camp employment by their own camp experiences (DeGraaf & Glover, 2003; Duerden et al., 2014). This motivating factor could possibly transfer to volunteer positions as well. According to the current Virginia 4-H camping

specialist, teen leaders at 4-H Camp most frequently come from within the 4-H program (S. Fisher, Personal Communication, January 29, 2020). Little was known, however, about the teens' lived experiences that motivate them to serve in these leadership roles.

Social Context

The 4-H program employs a youth-adult partnership model in which teenagers engage in leadership with support from caring adults (Bird & Subramaniam, 2018). This partnership extends to the 4-H Camping program (Epley et al., 2017; Ferrari & Arnett, 2011). Like other 4-H programs, youth are given increased responsibility and leadership opportunities as they age. Teens have the opportunity to become 4-H teen leaders after they meet three criteria: being age 14 or older, successfully completing teen leader training, and exhibiting the skills and positive role-modeling necessary to lead others (Meadows & Garst, 2001). 4-H Camp teen leaders are in critical leadership roles and have a tremendous influence on campers and their outcomes (Epley et al., 2017; Garst, 2004; Mainieri & Anderson, 2015, Pratt, 2021). Many 4-H programs use a transformative leadership model where in addition to providing leadership at camp, 4-H Camp teen leaders spend 20 hours or more in the months leading up to camp training and planning many of the activities (Femrite & Flatt, 2016). This model is used in Virginia 4-H (Meadows & Garst, 2001), even though the term transformative is not used.

Virginia 4-H Camp teen leaders, and others on the camp leadership team, commit to roles of great responsibility. These leaders serve *in loco parentis* at camp, caring for and supporting the campers as a parent would (Meadows & Garst, 2001). They provide supervision and guidance for approximately 17.5 waking hours per day and are on call during the night. Additionally, before even getting to the week of camp, the teen and adult leaders engage in 24 hours or more of camp training and planning. After camp, these same leaders help evaluate the

week and begin the planning cycle all over again (Meadows & Garst, 2001). On top of that, many teen leaders in Virginia pay a fee to attend. The problem persists, however, that little is understood about the experiences that motivate these teens to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. The problem is of primary importance to those professionals and adult volunteers working within the camping program. Understanding why teens sign up to be 4-H Camp teen leaders may help in recruitment methods, may lead to a closer examination of experiences that promote future camp leadership, and may help to enhance teen leader experiences through improved 4-H programming and teen-adult partnerships.

Theoretical Context

A study connecting lived experiences to a teen's motivation to freely give their time and energy to others by volunteering to serve as a 4-H Camp teen leader brings to mind the potential influence of theories focused on human development and motivation. Human development theories are plentiful. Some theories, such as those suggested by Piaget (2008) and Vygotsky (2019), focus more on cognitive development, with Vygotsky focusing on the influence of external factors and influences on one's development (Salkind, 2004). Other developmental theorists such as Freud, Bandura, and Erikson contributed significantly to the field as they focused on developmental aspects of the psyche, social learning, and identity, respectively (Newman & Newman, 2016). These theories contributed to the family of developmental theories that were later paired with relationism to form Lerner and Overton's relational developmental systems theory (RDST) (Lerner, Johnson, et al., 2015) which is one of the two theories integral to this study. The second theory framing this study is Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory (SDT) which they developed and have refined over the past several decades (Gagné & Deci, 2014). RDST connects context to development

(Lerner, Johnson, et al., 2015), and SDT links internal and external factors, such as a person's context, to motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

Relational Developmental Systems Theory

Relational developmental systems theory (RDST) is sometimes referred to as a paradigm, metatheory, or metamodel because it is an umbrella for a family of related theories (Overton, 2015). RDST holds that there is a bidirectional relationship between individuals and their surrounding environment, denoted as individual ←→ context (Lerner, Johnson, et al., 2015). It is person-centered (Lerner, Johnson, et al., 2015); therefore, the focus is on individual development. However, RDST theorists recognize that a person does not develop in a vacuum but is influenced by their ever-changing environment (Overton, 2015). A person can also shape their progress through their choices and, therefore, influence the environment or context around them (Lerner, Johnson, et al., 2015). Lerner and Spanier introduced developmental systems theory in 1978, referencing relationships between children and families (Lerner, Johnson, et al., 2015). Since that time, Overton, Lerner, and others have built upon the earlier foundational work to connect it to relationism and individual human development (Lerner, Johnson, et al., 2015). Using RDST as a backdrop for this study may help in understanding how specific experiences within developmental contexts influence teen motivation to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders.

Self-Determination Theory

Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory (SDT) focuses on internal needs and desires as well as external forces that lead an individual to act. Motivation, therefore, is connected to biological, social, and cultural factors (Deci & Ryan, 2000). SDT links an individual's need for competence, relatedness, and autonomy to what motivates them (Ryan &

Deci, 2017), with intrinsic and extrinsic factors or motivations as influencers (Ryan & Deci,

2002). Intrinsic and extrinsic motivators are not always mutually exclusive, however (Ryan &

Deci, 2017). Humans may internalize external influences for various reasons (Gagné & Deci,

2014; Ryan & Deci, 2017) described in chapter two. These influences, regardless of their origin,

impact human behavior (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Self-determination theory focuses on motivation

which is at the core of why teenagers choose to volunteer as teen leaders at 4-H Camp.

Problem Statement

The problem was the unknown of why teenagers volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. No

research could be found on this subject. Teen leaders, ages 14-19, play critical roles in the

successful outcome of 4-H Camp (Epley et al., 2017; Leff et al., 2015; Mainieri et al., 2015), but

little was known about what motivates them to become and remain 4-H Camp teen leaders.

Teens in leadership roles at 4-H Camp gain life skills (Anderson et al., 2010; Epley et al., 2021;

Nicholson & Klem, 2011) and experience positive developmental outcomes (Bird &

Subramaniam, 2018; Femrite & Flatt, 2016; Lewis et al., 2017). But first, they must apply and be

selected for this leadership role. The teen must have some desire or motivation to be a 4-H Camp

teen leader. Bode (2017) identified two primary motivators for teens to volunteer. The first was

doing something they find fulfilling, and the second was getting volunteer experience for college

or job applications. Their first point is supported by Burrow et al. (2018) who suggested that

having a sense of purpose motivates youth to engage in programs such as 4-H. Similarly, Nolen

et al. (2015) connected motivation to teenagers' sense of self, as well as to the context in which

they find themselves. With research surrounding teen leadership at 4-H Camp and research

identifying areas that lead to teen motivation, there was a gap in the literature surrounding teen

motivation to serve in a volunteer leadership role at 4-H Camp. The information gained from this

study helps fill the gap by exploring the lived experiences that motivate young people to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia.

Purpose Statement

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences that motivate teenagers to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. Throughout this study, motivation is defined as what drives someone to action (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The theories guiding this study were relational developmental systems theory (Lerner & Overton, 2008) and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000). RDST describes a process where individual development involves other individuals and the surrounding environment (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015). SDT positions both internal and external influences as motivating factors (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Positive youth development (PYD) is seated within RDST (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015) and is at the core of the 4-H program (Arnold & Gagnon, 2020, Arnold & Silliman, 2017; White et al., 2018). PYD, then, as part of the larger RDST, also informed this study, the findings of which begin to address a gap in the literature about what motivates teenagers to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders.

Significance of the Study

This study on the lived experiences that motivate teenagers to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders has empirical, theoretical, and practical significance. The findings contribute to what is known about 4-H Camp teen leaders and what motivates them to serve in that leadership role. 4-H professionals, camp staff, and volunteers working with 4-H Camp teen leaders may also find the information gleaned from the study useful.

Theoretical Significance

4-H, and by extension 4-H Camp, is grounded in positive youth development (Arnold &

Silliman, 2017; White et al., 2018) which is solidly placed within RDST (Lerner, Lerner, et al.,

2015). As a developmental context, a well-run 4-H program has the potential to provide an

environment where youth can experience positive developmental relationships with each other

and with caring adults, and within the systems put in place to support them (Arnold, 2018). This

study on the lived experiences that motivate teens to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in

Virginia reflected experiences from within the context of 4-H. This discovery was not surprising

since most 4-H Camp teen leaders were at one time 4-H campers (Bird & Subramaniam, 2018; S.

Fisher, Personal Communication, January 29, 2020), and there was an anticipated likelihood that

the teens would relate at least some experiences connected to PYD. The experiences occurred

within an environmental or social context with the bidirectional influence of individual $\longleftrightarrow$

context connecting theoretically to RDST (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015). The motivational

experiences also connected to Deci and Ryan's (2004) SDT.

Empirical Significance

Many studies connected to camping have focused on camper outcomes, with fewer

related to teen leader or staff outcomes and experiences (Carter & Kotrlik, 2008; Digby &

Ferrari, 2007; Henderson, 2018). There was an even greater void concerning motivation for

youth to become camp staff, particularly 4-H Camp teen leaders, and continue in that role.

However, there was evidence of a need for such research. In their study of the developmental

experiences of 4-H teen leaders, Carter and Kotrlik (2008) identified a need for further research

on why teens return as 4-H Camp teen leaders year after year. Bird & Subramaniam (2018)

suggested that understanding the growth teens experience at 4-H Camp may inform practitioners

about their experiences contributing to this growth and provide insight into the application of

PYD practices. Similarly, studies showing the benefits teens receive from being 4-H Camp teen

leaders may help teens and the adult influencers in their lives understand the importance of this experience (Nicholson & Klem, 2011). The need for more understanding about motivation and camp leaders was also evident in the larger context of camping in general. In a study of seasonal paid camp staff retention, Zigmond (2018) stated that understanding why staff members return in successive years could help camp directors with staff retention, which often leads to a better camp program due to having more experienced leaders. Even though motivation for paid and volunteer staff may differ, there could also be some overlap. Annesi (2020) raised questions about how a young person's experiences as a camper, and the benefits derived from them, may influence future leadership. Since most 4-H Camp teen leaders were at one time 4-H campers (Bird & Subramaniam, 2018; S. Fisher, Personal Communication, January 29, 2020), it begged delving deeper into understanding how these experiences may influence motivation to become leaders. Perhaps these experiences ignite a spark that shapes their path toward future leadership. Nurturing this spark through appropriate support, developmental activities, and experiences may provide motivation for future endeavors (Ben-Eliyahu et al., 2014; Femrite & Flatt, 2016). This study about why teenagers volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders lends empirical support to the literature that tangentially connects to this topic.

Practical Significance

This research adds to the 4-H Camping literature. It helps practitioners, parents, and others better understand the experiences that motivate the young people in this study to be 4-H Camp teen leaders. The study specifically focused on the experiences of 4-H Camp teen leaders within the Virginia 4-H program. This knowledge may aid in facilitating similar experiences for 4-H youth in the future -- campers, teen leaders, and non-camp youth. Research indicates that camp experiences have far-reaching outcomes (American Camping Association [ACA], 2005;

Henderson, 2018; Whittington & Garst, 2018). Studies have shown a linkage between positive

camp counselor experiences and a benefit to not just their campers and the overall camp

community but also to other communities and contexts of which these teens are a part (Ferrari &

Arnett, 2011; Leff et al., 2015). A better understanding of experiences motivating young people

to become 4-H Camp teen leaders may have broad implications for the 4-H camping community

and may also touch on the individual, family, and broader communities to which the young

people belong.

<p align="center">**Research Questions**</p>

The research questions were designed to address the problem of why teenagers volunteer

as 4-H Camp teen leaders. The questions were informed by the dual lens of relational

developmental systems theory combined with self-determination theory to understand better the

lived experiences of teenagers that motivate them to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in

Virginia. The central research question (CRQ) and corresponding sub-questions (SQ) follow.

Central Research Question

What lived experiences do teens identify that motivate them to volunteer as 4-H Camp

teen leaders?

Understanding the teens' perspectives about what experiences gave them the desire to be

a 4-H Camp teen leader can provide insight into this important topic. Teens, like all humans,

integrate what they learn and experience into their sense of self, and these experiences will either

build up or tear down the attributes contributing to self-image, including motivation (Ryan &

Deci, 2002; 2017). RDST indicates that human development is connected to how an individual

interacts with the surrounding environment (Lerner, Johnson, et al., 2015; Overton, 2015).

Through exploring the teens' experiences from their points of view, practitioners and others can

learn about the meaning these teenagers attached to their experiences and how the experiences shape their motivation to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders.

Sub-Question One

What experiences may be reflective of the tenets of positive youth development (PYD)?

PYD is intertwined within RDST, focusing on creating an environment where youth can build upon their strengths to gain skills that will help them both currently and into adulthood (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015). One of the core beliefs of PYD is that through healthy positive youth development, youth will adopt thriving trajectories which will lead them to think beyond themselves and contribute to their communities (Mariano & Going, 2011). With this in mind, and within the context of RDST, determining if a relationship exists between the experiences that motivate youth to become 4-H Camp teen leaders and the developmental context of positive youth development will help researchers and practitioners better understand the linkage between the experiences and motivation.

Sub-Question Two

What beliefs regarding benefits of being a 4-H Camp teen leader contribute to the teens' motivation?

Self-determination theory connects intrinsic motivation to the enjoyment of an activity and extrinsic motivation to a perceived outcome that the individual values (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Therefore, understanding what young people perceive as benefits of being a 4-H Camp teen leader is important for understanding their motivation. Linking this thought process of desire to volunteer with the perceived outcomes of being a 4-H Camp teen leader may shape understanding of why they do it.

Sub-Question Three

What experiences motivate teens to continue in 4-H Camp leadership roles after the first year?

In her research about youth volunteerism, Bode (2017) found that the teens and pre-teens she studied volunteered either because of an intrinsic desire to do so or because volunteer experience would look good on applications and resumés. She also found that for youth motivated by the external pressure to gain volunteer experience, many continued volunteering because they enjoyed it and received an internalized benefit (Bode, 2017). Since, according to RDST, individuals actively participate in their own development through the decisions they make and their contextual factors (Lerner, Johnson, et al., 2015), the teen leaders' experiences while in the volunteer role may contribute to their desire to continue in that role or not in future summers. Exploring if these experiences link to Ryan and Deci's (2017) concept of people needing social and environmental support to meet the needs that drive them connects back to the central question exploring experiences that motivate young people to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders.

Definitions

1. *4-H* – 4-H is a youth development program where caring adults engage youth in hands-on learning about subjects that interest them in a safe, diverse, and inclusive environment. (National 4-H Council, 2020a).

2. *4-H Camp Teen Leader* – A 4-H Camp teen leader is a teenager who, with help and support from adult partners, serves as volunteer staff working with younger youth at 4-H Camp (Bird & Subramaniam, 2018).

3. *4-H Thriving* – 4-H Thriving places 4-H programming as a developmental context that

incorporates thriving indicators to reach desired outcomes (Arnold, 2018).

4. *Context* – Context refers to the surrounding circumstances. It could refer to anything that describes a person's environment or ecology (Lerner, Johnson, et al., 2015), including experiences and relationships (Cantor et al., 2021).

5. *Contribution* – Contribution is the act of giving time, money, or other resources to individuals or groups (Fuligni, 2019).

6. *Motivation* – Motivation is what causes someone to act (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

7. *Organized Camping* – Organized camping typically refers to an overnight program lasting several days up to eight weeks or more (Ramsing, 2007) and is more than an actual event or location, but encompasses the camper experience (Garst & Bruce, 2003).

8. *Positive Youth Development (PYD)* - PYD is an approach to build on young people's assets rather than focusing on their deficits (Moore, 2017). It focuses on positive outcomes rather than on preventing negative outcomes (Geldhof et al., 2015).

9. *Relational Developmental Systems Theory* (RDST) – RDST holds that there is a bidirectional relationship between an individual and his surrounding environment, denoted as individual $\longleftrightarrow$ context (Overton, 2015).

10. *Self-Determination Theory* (SDT) – SDT focuses on biological, social, and cultural factors, manifesting as internal needs and desires as well as external forces that lead an individual to act (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

11. *Transformative Leadership Model in 4-H Camping* – A transformative leadership model for working with 4-H Camp teen leaders engages them fully as partners in camp planning and leadership and gives them ownership of the camp program (Femrite & Flatt, 2016).

12. *Volunteer* – To volunteer is to freely give one's time to the service of others (Salem

Press, 2014).

13. *Youth-Adult Partnership* (YAP*)* – YAPs involve youth and adults working together as
    equal participants in decision-making, planning, and program implementation
    (Innovation Center for Community and Youth Development, 2003).

Summary

Understanding what experiences motivate young people to become 4-H Camp teen leaders helps fill the literature gap about teen leadership in 4-H Camping. The study addresses the problem of why teenagers volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. The purpose was to describe the teens' lived experiences that motivate them to do so. This phenomenological study was guided by the dual theories of relational developmental systems theory (Overton, 2015) and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2004). Within RDST is the concept of PYD (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015) which informed this study due to the relationship between PYD and 4-H as a developmental context (Arnold & Gagnon, 2020; Arnold & Silliman, 2017; White et al., 2018).

Motivations change over time (Dunlop et al., 2017; Kanfer & Fletcher, 2020; Yamashita et al., 2019). However, Bode (2017) found that two primary motivators for teenagers were feeling fulfilled and gaining experience for applications and resumés. 4-H Camp teen leaders experience personal growth while performing their duties (Bird & Subramaniam, 2018) and have transformational experiences (Femrite & Flatt, 2016). Still, little was previously known about why they volunteer in these roles. The findings from this study helped to fill that gap by contributing to the literature about experiences that motivate youth to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. The information learned from these findings may also inform the work of 4-H professionals and volunteers as they work with 4-H Camp teen leaders and younger 4-H members.

CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

Overview

This literature review includes research related to teen motivation to volunteer as a 4-H Camp teen leader in Virginia. Searches were conducted within the EBSCO and Google Scholar databases from 2015-2022 using search terms of volunteer or contribute or contribution or civic engagement, 4-H Camp, 4-H teen leader, adolescent or adolescence or teen or teenager, and motivate or motivation. Relational developmental systems theory and self-determination theory are discussed in the context of positive youth development and youth contribution. This chapter is divided into three parts. The theoretical framework covers the two theories that frame this study, relational developmental systems theory (RDST) and self-determination theory (SDT). Related literature includes the topics of adolescent growth and development, motivation, positive youth development, youth contribution, residential camping, and 4-H. The summary connects the topics to show how they contribute to teen motivation to volunteer and 4-H Camp teen leadership. Although connections can be made, none of the existing literature expressly mentions the topic of teen motivation to volunteer as a 4-H Camp teen leader. More research is needed in this area.

Theoretical Framework

Two theories inform this study. Relational developmental systems theory (RDST) focuses on human development. Self-determination theory focuses on the motivation behind human behavior. Both theories set the foundation for a study related to the motivation behind why teenagers volunteer to be 4-H Camp teen leaders.

Relational Developmental Systems

Relational developmental systems theory (RDST) is sometimes referred to as a paradigm,

metatheory, or metamodel because it is an umbrella for a family of related theories (Overton, 2015). RDST recognizes that individual growth and development occur in relation to one's environment and the interactions occurring within that environment (Bell, 2019). Because of the significance of this interaction, RDST is depicted as individual $\longleftrightarrow$ context.

RDST has been shaped over a span of years. Lerner and Spanier first introduced the basis for the theory in 1978 by referencing relationships between children and families (Lerner, Johnson, et al., 2015). Since then, the theory has expanded to note the mutually influential relationship between an individual and their context beyond that of family relationships. Ford and Lerner (1992) refined the theory further, and Lerner continued to advance the theory. Lerner and Overton (2008) later elaborated upon it and formed the contemporary theory by pairing developmental systems theories with relationism. Relationism is simply how various aspects of the environmental context relate to each other and how the individual relates to them as a single factor or combined (Lerner & Overton, 2008). Overton (2015) later described RDST as an organized system where each part influences the other parts in relation to the whole context. This interrelationship becomes even more complex when considering how the parts and their sum influence the individual and vice versa (Overton, 2015). Lerner and Overton (2008) described the developmental process as an example of plasticity where the process is ever-changing throughout a lifespan. This change can be for the better or worse (Lerner & Overton, 2008). 4-H is grounded in positive youth development (PYD) (Arnold & Silliman, 2017; White et al., 2018) which is routed in RDST (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015). Therefore, a study involving what motivates teens to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders must be framed within the context of PYD and the overarching RDST to which it belongs.

Self-Determination Theory

Self-determination theory examines human behavior and development, focusing on motivating factors ranging from controlled to autonomous (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Deci and Ryan (1985) proposed SDT and have refined it over the years since, but it is based on earlier work by Andras Angyal, who, in 1941, said that both internal and external factors influence human behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2004). They suggested self-determination theory as three internal forces of competence, relatedness, and autonomy that drive behavior (Deci & Ryan, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2020). Competence reflects an individual's belief in their abilities and a feeling of mastery or growth, relatedness focusses on belonging and connection with others, and autonomy is a drive for independence, sense of self, and control over one's actions (Deci & Ryan, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2020).

The teenage years are often characterized as a period of growth and development where youth transition to adulthood (National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine [NASEM] et al., 2019; van Duijvenvoorde et al., 2016). Deci and Ryan's (2004) trio of autonomy, competence, and relatedness are all factors teenagers pursue and that drive their behavior as they approach adulthood (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Therefore, SDT, with its focus on what guides human motivation and behavior, is an appropriate theoretical frame for this study.

Combining RDST and SDT

Both RDST and SDT provide a backdrop for understanding teen motivation to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. Therefore, understanding both theories and how they interconnect is vital for this study. RDST describes an interconnection between individuals and their context. That developmental context helps shape the individual's development, but at the same time, the individual plays an active role in that process and, in doing so, also contributes to the

developmental context (Overton, 2015). Positive youth development, an approach seated within

RDST (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015), is the foundation of 4-H (Arnold & Silliman, 2017; National

4-H Council, 2020a; White et al., 2018) and, by extension, 4-H Camp (Bird & Subramaniam,

2018). 4-H, then, becomes the developmental context (Arnold, 2018; Roth & Brooks-Gunn,

2016) which frames this study of why teenagers volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. The mutual

interaction between the youth upon and within the developmental context of 4-H contributes to

their personal growth and development (Arnold, 2018). This growth may lead to a desire to

contribute to others (Hershberg et al., 2015). Developmentally, most adolescents are ready to

contribute to their communities through volunteerism (Fuligni, 2019). This desire or motivation

to contribute to others is at the core of why teenagers volunteer to be 4-H Camp teen leaders.

However, motivation is a complex topic; therefore, a study on youth motivation would not be

complete without factoring in the influences described by Ryan and Deci's (2002) self-

determination theory.

     Self-determination theory positions autonomy, competence, and relatedness as the three

basic psychological needs which are essential for motivation and well-being (Ryan & Deci,

2017). Perhaps not so coincidentally, these three basic needs are also essential factors within the

field of PYD, where independence, skill-building, and developmental relationships are key (Roth

& Brooks-Gunn, 2016). These three basic needs align with the 4-H Essential Elements (Lile et

al., 2021), one of the frameworks guiding 4-H programing. Anderson-Butcher (2005) proposed

that in order to recruit and retain youth in 4-H, it was imperative to increase motivation through

Ryan and Deci's (2000) motivational trio of competence, autonomy, and relatedness. When a

person (in this case, a teen) feels a sense of independence, a belief in their abilities, and a

connection to others, they experience factors that often lead to self-motivation (Ryan & Deci,

2002). When tied into RDST, these factors may encourage a desire to connect with and help others (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015). The dual theories of RDST and SDT will guide this study by providing a lens through which to frame the lived experiences described by the 4-H Camp teen leaders in this study.

Related Literature

This literature review section describes relevant research on adolescence, motivation, positive youth development, residential camping, 4-H Camp teen leadership, and contribution. The research identified results from an in-depth, critical review of the subtopics related to teen motivation to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders.

Adolescence

The age boundaries for adolescence are fuzzy and vary among cultures (NASEM et al., 2019); World Health Organization [WHO], 2020). Typically, adolescence is thought to begin when a young person reaches puberty and end at adulthood (Csikszentmihalyi, 2020; NASEM et al., 2019). According to the World Health Organization (2020), adolescence is not defined by age as much as by social transitions, which vary significantly by culture. The American Academy of Pediatrics [AAP] (2020) marked adolescence in the United States as ages 11-21, with early adolescence typically lasting until age 14, middle adolescence until 17, and late adolescence reflecting the young adult ages of 18-21. The National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine et al. (2019) defined adolescence in the United States differently. They focused attention mostly on adolescents ages 10-18 but emphasized that the last stage of adolescence is congruent with early adulthood and lasts until the age of 25 due to brain development and social roles of young adults (NASEM et al., 2019). The current study focused on middle adolescence, bleeding into late adolescence, as it follows the defined age range for

4-H Camp teen leadership of 14 years of age by January 1st prior to the start of the camping season and ending on December 31st in the year the youth turns 19 (Meadows & Garst, 2001).

Adolescent Physical and Emotional Growth

Teenagers experience tremendous physical and emotional growth (Dahl et al., 2018; Li et al., 2019; NASEM et al., 2019). They often push past traditional boundaries and engage in risk-taking as they find their place in the world (Hardy et al., 2015; van Duijvenvoorde et al., 2016). Teenagers frequently face a barrage of interconnected social, cultural, emotional, biological, and cognitive changes (Ciocanel et al., 2017). Adolescence is also when, because of these cognitive and emotional changes, teenagers may experience changes in pro-social behaviors such as cooperation, providing comfort, helping others, and volunteering (Carlo et al., 2015; Hardy et al., 2015; van Duijvenvoorde et al., 2016). Silke et al. (2018) described pro-social behaviors as those that someone does voluntarily to benefit others.

As teenagers shift their focus from family to peers during this stage of growth, they become more easily influenced by social situations or heightened emotional states (van Duijvenvoorde et al., 2016). They also try to establish their own identity (Crocetti, 2017; Dahl et al., 2018). Therefore, there is connectivity between motivation and how a young person navigates the context. Self-concept, relationships with others, and environment are all important factors (Crocetti, 2017; Nolen et al., 2015). During the teenage years, the human brain undergoes neural and biological changes (Fuligni, 2019; NASEM et al., 2019). Fuligni (2019) believed these changes might influence and motivate a teen to help others. He also noted a need for further study on teenagers' need to contribute (Fuligni, 2019).

The developmental stage marked by the teenage years is one where youth may establish identity, seek autonomy, and may gain agency to voice ideas and opinions (Crocetti, 2017; Lile

et al., 2021). A sense of belonging is also crucial during this time (Dahl et al., 2018; Lile et al., 2021). Teenagers are easily influenced by peers (Carlo & Padilla-Walker, 2020; Ben-Eliyahu et al., 2014; Gupta & Thapliyal, 2015). This peer pressure may also affect their decisions and behaviors (Bevelander et al., 2018; Dahl et al., 2018). Van Duijvenvoorde et al. (2016) suggested that the teen's social context influences the development of pro-social skills. These points are particularly important for adults working with youth to keep in mind as teenagers explore, test boundaries, and figure out their roles in society. A positive youth development context, such as that found in 4-H, may provide an avenue for exploration, opportunities to learn through trial and error, to build and strengthen skills, and to increase confidence and self-awareness (Arnold, 2017). Adults working with youth in a PYD context are responsible for fostering a sense of discovery, providing opportunities, and creating an atmosphere of encouragement and acceptance (Arnold, 2017). These adults also need to forge positive youth-adult partnerships, support youth strengths and peer relationships, and enhance opportunities for youth thriving (Bowers et al., 2015). Webb and Karlis (2019) conducted a qualitative multiple case study with three youth development organizations offering recreational activities in Ontario to learn what youth and staff perceived as the outputs, short-term outcomes, and long-term impacts of program participation. The researchers conducted 40 semi-structured individual interviews (18 youth ages 12-17 and 22 staff working directly with the youth) and one focus group with eight youth participants not previously involved in individual interviews. Webb and Karlis (2019) used a condensed 4 Cs framework (the 5 C's framework but with the two Cs of caring and character combined) to group the themes and subthemes. Among other noteworthy findings related to PYD, Webb and Karlis (2019) determined that the youth involved in the cases studied showed an orientation toward pro-social ideals; they were motivated to contribute to their communities,

confident in their abilities to do so, and viewed volunteerism as fun and rewarding. The youth in this study had been involved in their respective PYD program for several years, and the programs they were involved in were recognized as quality programs (Webb & Karlis, 2019). Sustained engagement is a key factor in PYD programs, although the intensity, duration, and breadth of engagement needed to initiate successful outcomes are as unique as the program participants (Arnold & Gagnon, 2019; Lerner, 2020). When evaluating PYD programs, program quality must be considered when measuring outcomes and impacts (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2016). High-quality programs more frequently have a greater impact on youth (Lerner et al., 2003). PYD programs have the potential to influence a young person's growth significantly.

Adolescent Self-Influence on Growth

By the teenage years, most teens have acquired and are refining the tools they need in terms of cognitive, behavioral, and social-relational skills to influence their own development (Bowers et al., 2015; Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015; NASEM et al., 2019). Bronfenbrenner and Morris (1998) indicated that as children grow older, their sphere of influence expands, their interactions with other people and objects become more complex, and their choices greatly influence development. Within Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs, teenagers are often at the stage of social and psychological need where they can consider giving of themselves to help others (Atkins & Harmon, 2016). Because of its connection to filling a desire for self-actualization, this desire to help others becomes what Maslow (1943) termed a psychologically important cognitive need. How people interact within their developmental contexts, their decisions, and their actions influence how they grow as individuals (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015). Within those developmental contexts, teens are preparing to do something with their lives (Atkins & Harmon, 2016; Bowers et al., 2015; Crocetti, 2017). Teen motivators may also change during this time of

transformation and growth (Dahl et al., 2018; van Duijvenvoorde et al., 2016).

Motivation

As a critical component of self-determination theory, Ryan and Deci (2017) described motivation as the benefits or drawbacks a person perceives that result in action or inaction. Research situating motivation within the environmental or social context indicates that basic needs and other supports are desirable to create a positive environment where individuals feel connected and satisfied (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Ryan and Deci (2002) indicated that context could greatly influence an individual's behavior, with a nurturing context enabling growth and a negative context impeding it. Basic motivation can be broken down into intrinsic motivation, which is derived from an inner desire to do something, and extrinsic motivation, which occurs because of some external pressure or influence (Ryan & Deci, 2002; 2020).

Intrinsic Motivation

Someone who acts from intrinsic motivation does so for the satisfaction or enjoyment they derive from engaging in the activity (Ryan & Deci, 2000). It is autonomous, meaning that a person acts on behalf of oneself (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Deci and Ryan (2000) described this intrinsic motivation as a drive to meet a basic psychological need. They indicated that the social context could influence intrinsic motivation, such that events that positively influence a person's autonomy and competence will increase intrinsic motivation, while events that decrease these two internal forces will cause intrinsic motivation to diminish (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Similarly, a person must experience autonomy and competence to sustain intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Ideally, this autonomy and competence occur within the context of relatedness, another important support for intrinsic motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Relatedness encompasses social connection, a feeling of belonging, significance, or mattering, and giving or contributing to

others (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Intrinsic motivation is often associated with better outcomes in performance which can impact academics, sports, community activities, and job performance (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Actions derived from intrinsic motivation are completely autonomous because the desire to do them comes from within (Deci & Ryan, 2002). For example, teens may take an oil painting class because they enjoy unleashing their creativity and improving their skills. They may participate in 4-H because it is fun. PYD programs, such as 4-H, help youth work toward independence (autonomy) and mastery of skills (competence) (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2016) in the context of strong developmental relationships (Pekel et al., 2019) and may, according to SDT, help promote intrinsic motivation.

Extrinsic Motivation

When a person acts because of some expected outcome, the act is driven by extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2000). Extrinsic motivation is caused by external factors (Ryan & Deci, 2002) such as a perceived reward or punishment, social influence or approval, or some desired outcome (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Whereas intrinsic motivation is autonomous, extrinsic motivation can vary in the degree to which it is controlled or autonomous, creating a continuum of motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). This continuum (figure 1) moves from amotivation to external to internal motivational forces; the forces are identified as non-regulation, external, introjected, identified, integrated, and intrinsic (Ryan & Deci, 2000).

External motivation is very controlled (Deci & Ryan, 2002). It is in response to some sort of external force (Ryan & Deci, 2017) such as a punishment or reward (Ryan & Deci, 2020). It is not integrated into oneself and may be done because of the consequence, not because of willingness or interest in the act (Ryan & Deci, 2017). A teen acting out of external motivation may enter a contest because of the prize offered.

Figure 1

The Motivation Continuum

		Self-Determination Theory's Taxonomy of Motivation				
Motivation	AMOTIVATION	EXTRINSIC MOTIVATION				INTRINSIC MOTIVATION
Regulatory Style		External Regulation	Introjection	Identification	Integration	
			Internalization			
Attributes	• Lack of perceived competence, • Lack of value, or • Nonrelevance	• External rewards or punishments • Compliance • Reactance	• Ego involvement • Focus on approval from self and others	• Personal importance • Conscious valuing of activity • Self-endorsement of goals	• Congruence • Synthesis and consistency of identifications	• Interest • Enjoyment • Inherent satisfaction
Perceived Locus of Causality	Impersonal	External	Somewhat External	Somewhat Internal	Internal	Internal

Note. This figure shows the continuum of motivation as it moves from amotivation to types of motivation from the most controlled, least autonomous forms to the most autonomous form of motivation, intrinsic motivation. Image used with permission from the Center for Self-Determination Theory.

Introjected motivation is internally driven by external factors (Ryan & Deci, 2017) but not accepted as one's own and is still relatively controlled (Ryan & Deci, 2002). It occurs when someone acts with concern for their ego or out of a sense of shame or thought of one's standing with others (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Typically, an individual acting out of introjected motivation is compelled to act out of concern for what others will think (Eccles & Wigfield, 2002). Ryan and Deci (2017) described this motivation as arising from inner turmoil or conflict. Deci and Ryan (2002) differentiate external motivation as having the consequences come from another person, while the consequences for introjected motivation are self-administered. A teen acting because of

introjected motivation may lie or adopt an attitude of disinterest or noncaring to avoid perceived shame.

Identified motivation occurs from a sense of duty or recognition of the action's importance (Ryan & Deci, 2020). It has been partially internalized because the individual accepts the value of the activity (Deci & Ryan, 2002). A teen may eat an apple rather than a cookie because they know the apple is the healthier choice. Another may return a wallet found on the sidewalk because it is the right thing to do.

Integrated motivation is acting because of a network of factors tied to a person's self-concept or future self-image (Ryan & Deci, 2020). It is the most autonomous of the extrinsic motivators (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Actions taken because of integrated motivation share many similarities to those from intrinsic motivation. However, they are not done for enjoyment but rather because of the anticipated result, a characteristic of extrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2002). Teens may take dual enrollment classes in high school, not because the classes are fun and they desire the experience, but because they feel that graduating with an associate's degree will help them reach their goals.

Integrating Motivation into the Psyche

Individuals are motivated by many factors that influence their behavior (Maslow, 1943). The thought of reaching a goal or working toward that goal may, itself, motivate a behavior (Maslow, 1943). When working with youth, providing opportunities for autonomy where youth can feel empowered to be in control of their situation, make choices, and take the initiative tends to increase intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Deci and Ryan (2004) identified that in addition to autonomy, competence and interpersonal relatedness are equally important needs that must be met for intrinsic motivation to flourish.

Ryan and Deci (2002) initially identified four mini-theories within SDT and later added two more (2017). The mini-theories, which are all interconnected, focus on motivation and how people integrate it into their psyche (Ryan & Deci, 2017). These mini-theories listed below illustrate how a teenager may be motivated toward various actions.

1. Cognitive evaluation theory describes how certain social factors influence a person's intrinsic motivation and how that, in turn, affects their well-being. This mini-theory explains why positive feedback from a teacher or peers may motivate a young person to pursue a specific course of action, while negative feedback may stifle further action (Ryan & Deci, 2002; 2017).

2. Organismic integration theory focuses on extrinsic motivation and how individuals reconcile external motivators with their feelings of autonomy. Specifically, it relates to how individuals internalize an external motivation such as socially expected behaviors. Within this mini-theory are stages of internalization found on the continuum from extrinsic to intrinsic (Ryan & Deci, 2002; 2017) and previously described.

3. Causality orientations theory involves ways people orient themselves in social environments that lead to a pattern of behavior. There are three primary orientations. The most positive outcomes tend to come from individuals with an autonomous orientation who view their environment as full of possibilities. Those with a control orientation focus on external rewards and environmental pressures. The least positive outcomes tend to come from individuals with an impersonal orientation who do not believe they can influence or control their environments and lack motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2002; 2017).

4. Basic psychological needs theory focuses on a person's motivation and goals in relation to their well-being. People are motivated to supply their basic needs, which are

essentially universal across all cultures. When that motivating force leads to meeting basic needs, individuals experience greater well-being. However, when that motivational force is thwarted, negative consequences result (Ryan & Deci, 2002; 2017).

5. Goal contents theory incorporates the relationship between a person's goals, needs-satisfaction, and personal well-being. These factors are divided into intrinsic aspirations that are personally satisfying when met and extrinsic aspirations that are desirable to reach unmet needs. Examples of intrinsic aspirations are being in a loving relationship or feeling fulfilled by helping others. Examples of extrinsic aspirations are getting a good job or being able to retire early (Ryan & Deci, 2017).

6. Relationship motivation theory connects autonomy and relatedness to both individual and group interpersonal relationships. It positions relatedness as a basic psychological need. According to relationship motivation theory, when an individual is engaged in a mutual, trusting relationship and is both experiencing and giving autonomy, that person will tend to have a greater sense of well-being and mattering (Ryan & Deci, 2017). This relatedness also appears to be an essential backdrop that provides the needed support for individuals to confidently follow the task they are intrinsically motivated to do (Deci & Ryan, 2000).

These mini-theories are all connected to a person's basic phycological needs and are pieces of the larger self-determination theory (Ryan & Deci, 2002; 2017) which helps explain motivation.

Teenage Motivation

Adolescence is a time when youth not only shape their identity but also develop connections with supportive adults (Ballard & Syme, 2016). In his work on positive youth

development, Larson (2000) suggested that initiative may be connected to forming positive relationships with caring adults and peers. He also linked it to autonomy (Larson, 2000). According to Larson (2000), this initiative involves intrinsic motivation coupled with engagement over time. Nearly 20 years later, Larson et al. (2019) drew on qualitative interview data from three studies of high-quality project-based youth development programs to learn more about participant motivation and how youth sustained motivation. They found that through long-term engagement, motivation tended to increase and to become more self-sustained (Larson et al., 2019). Using grounded theory analysis to look for patterns in the interview data, Larson et al. (2019) identified three components of the programs that contributed to high and sustained motivation levels. They were (a) the experiential nature of the programs where youth participated in discipline-specific tasks, (b) the collaborative environment, and (c) the youth-centeredness of the programs where youth felt a sense of belonging and were able to develop strong relationships with peers and adult staff (Larson et al., 2019). Larson et al. (2019) noted that youth's level of motivation varied throughout the program. It ebbed and flowed according to when youth experienced setbacks or achieved major goals (Larson et al., 2019). This concept connects to Damon's (2008) idea of purpose, which is connected to motivation, providing excitement and joy in good times and resilience through difficult ones. Larson et al.'s (2019) research identified the areas of competency, relatedness, and autonomy as key to helping youth develop and sustain high levels of self-motivation. The same concepts are key in Deci and Ryan's (2004) self-determination theory.

On the other end of the motivation continuum, van Duijvenvoorde et al. (2016) believed that extrinsic motivation, specifically reward sensitivity, plays a vital role in teenage motivation. These rewards may not necessarily go to the teens themselves, however. Findings show that

teens may feel satisfaction simply by delighting in the rewards of others (van Duijvenvoorde et al., 2016). Eccles and Wigfield (2002) recognized that extrinsic motivation may be connected to need achievement and, while entirely external at first, may be internalized over time. Jones et al. (2021) also found that extrinsic motivators may be why youth become involved in certain youth programs, such as Pittsburgh's Youth Enrichment Services (YES). However, in their case study of this program and the youth involved, Jones et al. (2021) found that through positive youth-adult relationships which supported Deci and Ryan's (2004) concepts of relatedness, competence, and autonomy, and over time, youth internalized their desire to be part of the program.

Not all researchers ascribe to the use of intrinsic and extrinsic when discussing motivation. Schwartz and Wrzensniewski (2019) suggested that the currently-used terminology is nebulous and should be replaced with internal and instrumental, which they claimed was more accurate due to motivational nuances. Internal indicates that the person either performs the activity for pure enjoyment or because it is tied to achieving a desired goal or consequence, with the person caring about both the goal and what it takes to get there. Instrumental indicates that the person performs the activity simply to reach the end goal or consequence and for no other reason (Schwartz & Wrzensniewski, 2019). Regardless of the terminology used and nuances in meaning, it is still evident that many factors influence motivation and that these factors may blend together at times.

The context in which teens find themselves may influence their motivation beyond Ryan & Deci's (2002) view of extrinsic motivation stemming from others and intrinsic motivation occurring from within. Nolen et al. (2015) felt that motivation and subsequent engagement were connected to the social or learning context and therefore moved beyond the simple classification

of intrinsic versus extrinsic motivation (Nolen et al., 2015) to encompass a situational

component. Similarly, Carlo and Padilla-Walker (2020) indicated that applying the situation to

context had implications for motivation as it related to prosocial behaviors, particularly among

various cultural groups, age ranges, and specific environmental conditions. Vanhalst et al. (2018)

studied motivation in the situational context of chronic loneliness with a sample of 730

teenagers, nearly three-quarters female. All students in grades 9-12 from three schools were

invited to participate in the longitudinal study where researchers employed the Loneliness and

Aloneness Scale for Children and Adolescents instrument to assess levels of loneliness during

each of the four waves. During the fourth wave, which included 54% of the original participants,

the researchers administered a pilot-tested series of ten situational vignettes and questions related

to them to determine levels of motivation and emotional regulation (Vanhalst et al., 2018). They

found that chronically lonely adolescents were amotivated or motivated by introjected and

external pressures to attend social events; they had the highest scores on the motivation scale for

these three motivational types and low scores related to intrinsic motivation (Vanhalst et al.,

2018). This study was conducted with Dutch-speaking Belgium youth, and results may vary if a

similar study were conducted in the United States. Another international study on situational

motivation took place in Spain to determine motivation for fitness testing in overweight versus

non-overweight students (Grao-Cruces et al., 2020). It involved 534 adolescent secondary school

students from six schools in southern Spain. Students completed a short perceived physical

fitness survey and took anthropometric measurements on the first day. On day two, they

completed a physical fitness test and the Spanish version of the Situational Motivation Scale

questionnaire about their situational motivation regarding the fitness test (Grao-Cruces et al.,

2020). Grao-Cruces et al. (2020) found that much like Vanhalst et al.'s (2018) study about the

situation of chronic loneliness, overweight students had a lower intrinsic motivation and a higher level of external motivation and amotivation than their non-overweight peers regarding physical fitness testing. These studies of situational motivation indicate the importance of contextual factors in influencing motivation.

A person's social positioning and the opportunities presented to that individual may also impact motivation and engagement (Nolen et al., 2015), as could cultural influences (Carlo & Padilla-Walker, 2020). Akiva and Horner (2016) echoed the idea of social status, opportunities, and other contextual factors being significant but also found that relationships with caring and supportive adults were a substantial factor in teen motivation. Hershberg et al. (2015) also found that context was important for teens in shaping their identities and that access to supportive environments with caring adults was critically important in influencing their actions. This finding supports the SDT concept of relatedness being connected to motivation and the RDST concept of the bidirectional influence of individuals and their context. Knowing that context and relationships with supportive adults are important factors in teen motivation, there is a great opportunity for youth development professionals, teachers, coaches, and others to influence young people at this particular stage of development.

Positive Youth Development

Positive Youth Development (PYD) focuses not on fixing deficits or negative behaviors but on building upon a young person's strengths or potential strengths (Ciocanel et al., 2017; Moore, 2017). When introduced, it was a relatively novel concept in youth work. Focusing on positive outcomes replaced an emphasis on preventing negative outcomes (Geldhof et al., 2015). The strengths-based approach of PYD typically has three components: (a) focusing on methods and activities leading to positive growth, (b) maintaining supportive environments with sustained

positive peer and adult relationships, and (c) providing opportunities for youth to gain leadership experience (Lerner, 2004).

PYD is not one particular program or curriculum. Rather, it is an approach that involves many divergent methods, each with an overarching PYD structure (Moore, 2017). Because of this, PYD programs vary greatly (Ciocanel et al., 2017). Most, however, encompass competency and skill-building in supportive environments with nurturing relationships (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). PYD is seen as an approach for youth programs to guide the focus on positive outcomes (Moore, 2017). Some proponents of PYD consider it an intervention method designed to reduce the negative by focusing on the positive (Moore, 2017). Recognizing that youth are diverse and come from a myriad of backgrounds and circumstances, PYD programs must consider the individual youth's context and the bidirectional relationship between the individual and that context (Lerner et al., 2021). This individualistic approach leads to PYD programs that are as unique as the people involved in them.

The many methods employed by positive youth development organizations and professionals working within them have made it challenging to study PYD adequately. In a meta-analysis of 24 studies of after-school and out-of-school PYD programs, Ciocanel et al. (2017) found mixed results. They attributed the difficulties they had in comparing data across studies to the great variability between program design and goals within PYD and to studies that lacked sound design (Ciocanel et al., 2017). In their synthesis of PYD program effectiveness, Ciocanel et al. (2017) found that the effects were either non-significant, as in the case of increasing pro-social behavior or reducing risky behaviors, or moderate, as in the case of academic achievement and phycological well-being. Ciocanel et al. (2017) identified one possible limitation to their meta-analysis as the lack of consistency in measured outcomes among

studies, largely due to the high degree of variation in program emphasis and methods within the various PYD frameworks. Waid and Uhrich (2020) found similar results in their scoping review of 65 articles related to PYD. A scoping review is a methodology to assess emerging evidence in a relatively new field of research (Peterson et al., 2017). Waid and Uhrich (2020) determined that there was great diversity in PYD programs, with each tailored to specific goals surrounding PYD and the youth they served. They also noted that studies involving PYD used such diverse methods that aggregating data was difficult (Waid & Uhrich, 2020). These findings match Currin and Wexler's (2017) determination of heterogeneity among school-based PYD programs taking place outside of regular school hours. In their systematic review of the literature, they initially found 711 articles, but when narrowed to those published after the year 2000 and those reporting either quantitative or qualitative data on PYD outcomes, they only had 27 remaining. Further screening resulted in a review of 24 PYD school-based programs (Currin & Wexler, 2017).

Similar impediments in PYD research exist when narrowed down to only one type of PYD program. Agans et al. (2020) identified obstacles in studying a multitude of PYD programs and focused their research on PYD within the national 4-H program. They conducted a qualitative scoping review of peer-reviewed journal articles and grey literature to understand 4-H youth outcomes better and to examine the various levels of scientific rigor used to obtain empirical evidence (Agans et al., 2020). From the 109 papers in their final sample, Agans et al. (2020) determined that most of them fell in the lowest category of scientific rigor. Among the more rigorous of these studies, evidence indicated benefits to youth participation in 4-H for the programs surveyed, such as improved academics, a more positive outlook on life, and greater levels of competence, confidence, connection, character, caring, and contribution compared to non-4-H youth (Agans et al., 2020). However, this evidence would be more compelling if the

methods used in collecting data followed rigorous research practices. Borden et al. (2014) suggested that one way to strengthen evaluation measures within 4-H was to standardize program implementation. However, Lerner (2020) strongly opposed this standardization of any PYD program since standardization prevents practitioners in the field from tailoring such a program to the individual needs of individual youth in their particular context and building upon their particular strengths.

Improving study design and reporting in the field of PYD would further advance the field by capturing evidence-based outcomes. However, Arnold and Gagnon (2019) indicated that learning about outcomes is not enough; understanding the process involved in obtaining those outcomes is equally important. They advocated PYD studies aimed at understanding how youth thrive in PYD programs in order to reach identified outcomes (Arnold & Gagnon, 2019). Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2016) also stressed the importance of learning how these outcomes come about through the PYD context. Lerner (2020) expanded on this to indicate that, in accordance with RDST, researchers and practitioners need to understand the specific ways PYD works with specific youth in a specific context. Because teenagers are at a stage of life where they undergo great physical, phycological, and emotional changes (Dahl et al., 2018; Li et al., 2019; NASEM et al., 2019) and because they are so easily influenced by peers (Carlo & Padilla-Walker, 2020; Ben-Eliyahu et al., 2014; Gupta & Thapliyal, 2015), by their surrounding context (Cantor et al., 2021), and by the developmental relationships within the context (Pekel et al., 2018), having a better understanding of PYD implementation, and its strengths and limitations, can help guide those working with youth toward more positive youth outcomes (Waid & Uhrich, 2020).

Positive Youth Development and Relational Developmental Systems Theory

In examining the mutual individual $\longleftrightarrow$ context relationship, context refers to the

individual's interaction with his environment, which is not fixed but is everchanging because of the ongoing interaction with it (Overton, 2015). These interactions may be positive or negative. In a nurturing environment where positive youth development occurs, youth may feel safe to stretch themselves and try new things. They may have positive relationships in which they receive support and encouragement. An environment such as this may influence and shape an individual's personal growth and future engagement.

The ecological assets of the environment include parents, peers, and youth programs (Bowers et al., 2015) as well as social institutions, schools, and communities (Lerner, Johnson, et al., 2015). Teens, in particular, are at a stage of developmental growth where building upon their strengths in a positive and encouraging environment can impact them significantly (Ciocanel et al., 2017). Teens typically have the cognitive, social, and behavioral skills to influence their own trajectories (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015); however, they can easily be influenced by the words and actions of others, and by opportunities available or lacking in their lives (Eccles, & Gootman, 2002; McGuire, 2016; van Duijvenvoorde et al., 2016).

RDST is the theory upon which positive youth development (PYD) is based (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015). PYD is a strengths-based approach to youth development where youth develop positive relationships with caring and supportive adults while engaging in experiences that challenge them and help them develop various skills (Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2016). Rather than focusing on youth deficits, PYD programs help youth build their strengths or developmental assets (Scales et al., 2017). Because of the plasticity in human development, the idea emerges that perhaps by structuring the context in a positive and meaningful way, the individual will be placed on a positive developmental trajectory (Lerner & Overton, 2008; Overton, 2015).

Because of the positive developmental outcomes that often result from attending

residential youth camps such as 4-H Camp, organized overnight camping is a developmental

context employing the principles of PYD (Halsall et al., 2016). Many 4-H Camp teen leaders

were once campers (Bird & Subramaniam, 2017; S. Fisher, Personal Communication, January

29, 2020). Their lived experiences, whether at 4-H Camp or in another developmental context,

help shape future engagement, according to RDST (Bell, 2019; Overton, 2015). This is a critical

concept in understanding the lived experiences that motivate youth to volunteer as 4-H Camp

teen leaders.

Positive Youth Development Frameworks

Three PYD frameworks stand out as well-established with supporting research (Arnold et

al., 2016; Arnold & Silliman, 2017). The Developmental Assets framework, developed by the

Search Institute, identifies factors that promote positive development while reducing risky

behaviors (Arnold & Silliman, 2017; Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015; Wiium & Dimitrova, 2019).

This framework boasts 40 assets divided among four internal asset categories and four external

asset categories (Syvertsen et al., 2019). The Developmental Assets framework was instrumental

in the early promotion of PYD and provided a shared vocabulary for practitioners and

researchers in the field. The Search Institute has recently begun the research process to update

the identified developmental assets to use more modernized language and to reflect the diverse

demographic of youth to which the assets apply (Syversten et al., 2019). It has partnered with

various international organizations to test and modify the Developmental Assets Profile, a

widely-used survey measure developed by the Search Institute to measure developmental assets,

in order to validate its use across countries and cultures (Scales et al., 2017). This framework

remains relevant as it incorporates internal and external assets and combines them with positive

developmental experiences while also recognizing the existing risk factors (Arnold et al., 2016).

The Five Cs model of PYD (figure 2) focuses on developing skills through engaging activities and positive adult and peer relationships (Arnold & Silliman, 2017; Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015; Wiium & Dimitrova, 2019). Lerner and Lerner (2013) tested this model in their longitudinal 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development; therefore, it is one of the most rigorously tested PYD frameworks and the only one to double as a model (Arnold et al., 2016). The Cs are competence, confidence, character, caring, and connection (Geldhof et al., 2015; Roth & Brooks-Gunn, 2003). This framework focuses on engaging youth in activities where they can develop these five attributes. These five Cs are thought to bring about the sixth C of contribution, where youth volunteer or give back to others (Geldhof et al., 2015; White et al., 2018).

The Community Action framework was one of the earliest frameworks. It was focused on describing the conditions where communities, including youth organizations and other contexts, best-helped youth, particularly the ones least likely to thrive, to meet their full potential (Gambone et al., 2010). It focuses on community capacity for change, providing supports and opportunities for youth, and improving developmental outcomes in both the short- and long-term (Gambone et al., 2010). Simplified, it reflects caring adults providing youth with meaningful opportunities (Arnold & Silliman, 2017; Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015).

4-H Frameworks

Additional frameworks focused on positive youth development are used extensively in 4-H, but according to Arnold and Silliman (2017) need to be used more consistently and intentionally. 4-H relies heavily on the previously-mentioned Five Cs of Positive Youth Development, Essential Elements of 4-H, and Targeting Life Skills (Arnold & Silliman, 2017; White et al., 2018).

The 4-H program is the nation's largest and longest-running organized youth program, having existed for over 100 years (Agans et al., 2020; Kress, 2014). It is part of the Cooperative Extension system run through the land grant universities in each state (Bird & Subramaniam, 2017; National 4-H Council, 2021b). 4-H is often considered to be an agriculture program, but it has a much broader focus on youth development, with agriculture as one curricular area out of many where youth learn life skills (National 4-H Council, 2020c).

The Five Cs model (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015) is one framework used extensively in 4-H (Arnold & Silliman, 2017). The 4-H Study of PYD (Lerner & Lerner, 2013) was a longitudinal study that provided solid supporting research for this model (Arnold et al., 2016). This study yielded a wealth of information on many subjects, but one theme which emerged early on was the prominent use of the concepts of competence, confidence, character, caring, connection, and contribution by 4-H practitioners, participants, and parents (Bowers et al., 2010). The study began with a sample of fifth graders in the 2002-2003 school year and ended eight years later, involving over 7,000 youth from 42 states. As some youth dropped out of the study, other youth were added; therefore, not every young person participated in all eight years (Lerner & Lerner, 2013). This study is regarded as landmark research indicating that youth development programs such as 4-H can promote PYD successfully (Lerner & Lerner, 2013). The study was limited in that the sample, despite its size, lacked proportional representation from youth of varying racial and ethnic backgrounds.

Hershberg et al. (2014) analyzed qualitative data from Lerner and Learner's (2013) 4-H Study of PYD using data from grades 6, 9, and 12 to study youth trajectories of well-being and contribution. Data came from qualitative responses from 56 youth who participated in the study during all three waves. Hershberg et al. (2014) also calculated the participants' PYD scores

based on the quantitative data they supplied and learned that these 56 participants consistently scored in the top half of the PYD score distribution for the entire PYD study sample. They analyzed data within the waves, across the waves, and on the interindividual level and found patterns that emerged as the youth involved in the study aged (Hershberg et al., 2014). Through coding and thematic analysis, the researchers discovered that contribution was valued highly by youth across age ranges, with connection, academics, and athletics being the themes that emerged ahead of it (Hershberg et al., 2014). As sixth graders, the youth overall tended to have more idealized views of contribution and noted it as an important part of their idealized future selves. However, it was not as meaningful in their lives at that time as were the areas of connection, academics, and athletics. As the group aged, contribution became more meaningful as athletics and academics waned to a small degree (Hershberg et al., 2014).

Informed by Hershberg et al.'s (2014) study of well-being and contribution and from the overall results of the 4-H Study of PYD (Lerner & Lerner, 2013), Hershberg et al. (2015) discovered that youth behaviors could be predicted by self-regulation combined with youth program participation. They also found that having hopeful future expectations and a strong connection with peers, family, and non-parental adults was a strong predictor of youth contribution (Hershberg et al., 2015. Suggested implications for PYD professionals were that youth need access to community support (such as PYD programs) and caring and supportive adults (Hershberg et al., 2015). Another noteworthy finding was that youth may simultaneously engage in problem or risky behaviors and contribute to others, self, and the community, meaning that PYD professionals can successfully promote contribution among all youth (Hershberg et al., 2015). The 4-H Study of PYD and the additional studies that have utilized data from it provide a strong underpinning of the 5 Cs model for which the resulting sixth C of contribution is critical

for understanding the current study of why teens volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. These studies lend an overall backdrop to this research.

Two other frameworks do not have the level of research backing as the 5 Cs model but are used extensively in 4-H. These are the Essential Elements of 4-H and the Targeting Life Skills model (Arnold & Silliman, 2017; Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015). The Essential Elements of 4-H (figure 3) repackages the Circle of Courage (Brendtro et al., 2005) with a focus on making sure that there is an emphasis on belonging, generosity, independence, and mastery (Kress, 2005). Eight elements are grouped into these four concepts, known internally to 4-H as the Essential Elements because they are foundational components of a successful 4-H program (Kress, 2005; Samuel & Rose, 2011; White et al., 2018). These Essential Elements match adolescents' developmental needs where belonging matches with relatedness, generosity involves helping others, independence corresponds to autonomy, and mastery connects to competence (Lile et al., 2021).

The Targeting Life Skills model (figure 4) intentionally incorporates learning activities to help youth develop age-appropriate and sequential skills that will be needed as they grow and mature (Hendricks, 1998). These skills are grouped within the four Hs of 4-H, where head incorporates thinking and managing skills, heart includes skills of relating to and caring for others, hands comprise giving and working, and health incorporates skills related to living and being (Norman & Jordan, 2006/2018). Like the Essential Elements of 4-H, the Targeting Life Skills model also correlates to basic developmental needs (White et al., 2018), where relatedness captures social skills, conflict resolution, and accepting differences, among others. Skills related to helping others include service learning, concern for others, responsible citizenship, and more. The connection to autonomy comes from skills of self-esteem, resiliency, goal setting, self-

discipline, and self-motivation. Competence stems from skills in critical thinking, decision-making, gaining marketable skills, using resources wisely, and more (White et al., 2018). 4-H uses all of these frameworks to arrive at target outcomes, but none explain how to reach those outcomes to practitioners or stakeholders.

4-H Thriving

The 4-H Thriving model (figure 5) is an emerging theoretical model that links youth development processes to positive outcomes influencing youth thriving (Arnold, 2018). In other words, it unpacks the mystery of what happens within the developmental context to influence certain outcomes (Arnold & Gagnon, 2019). The 4-H program is a developmental context (Arnold, 2018; Arnold & Gagnon, 2020), and as such, RDST suggests that youth's experiences and interactions while engaged in 4-H contribute to their development. Thriving is a process that occurs over time and is a process connected to internal regulation exhibited within a specific context (Benson & Scales, 2009). The 4-H Thriving model is currently being used in Oregon (Oregon State University, 2020), California (Regents of the University of California, 2020), and Wisconsin (University of Wisconsin-Madison, 2021), with several other states incorporating it while research is being conducted nationwide to gather evidence to support the model (National Association of 4-H Youth Development Professionals, 2019). Garst et al. (2016) called for a better understanding of the factors leading to youth achieving desired outcomes, particularly in the camp setting. The 4-H Thriving model is staged to help those working in 4-H (and other youth organizations) identify indicators linking the developmental context to these positive outcomes. These indicators are "openness to challenge and discovery, hopeful purpose, transcendent awareness, positive emotionality, pro-social orientation, and intentional self-regulation" (Arnold, 2018, p. 150).

Residential Camping and 4-H Camp

When coupled with high-quality programming delivered by well-trained, effective counselors, the residential camp setting is an environment where positive youth development is likely to occur (Halsall et al., 2016). Camp counselors develop supportive relationships with their campers and create a safe space where it is okay to try new things and not necessarily experience success (Schelbe et al., 2018). In their study of defining moments of summer camp experiences, Garst and Wittington (2020) discovered that memorable and meaningful experiences were often related to making friends, emotional safety, camping traditions, experiencing challenges that promoted growth, and positive interactions with camp staff. These results emerged from coding and thematic data analysis from 21 semistructured interviews with 4-H campers ages 12-14 who had attended 4-H Camp for at least two summers. The participants all camped at the same facility, but not necessarily during the same camp week. They represented 17 counties throughout the state (Garst & Wittington, 2020). Camp experiences can impact youth significantly regarding their growth and development (Garst et al., 2016; Leff et al., 2015). 4-H Camp experiences are no different.

4-H Camp

Junior 4-H Camp can be a life-changing experience for many youth (National 4-H Council, 2021a). Each state follows a slightly different camping model, but the core premise of helping youth have positive growth experiences is the same. In Virginia, youth spend five days and four nights immersed in hands-on, experiential learning in a safe and supportive environment where they can gain various life skills such as independence, teamwork, decision-making, and responsibility (VPI&SU, 2021a). Although all 4-H programs are designed with the same outcome in mind, 4-H camp provides an intense dosage of programming in a short period of

time. Garst et al. (2016) purported that camp has significant potential for growth in just a few days because of the intensity and duration and the supportive bonds that form during the camp week. Leff et al. (2015) echoed these views that the intensity of camp programming opens the doors wide for significant personal growth during camp.

Camp as a Precursor to Contribution

While not all youth who attend camp emerge with a desire to give back to their communities, a spark seems to ignite for some youth. Mainieri and Anderson (2015) recognized camp as a unique setting that could promote skills related to future contribution and studied one particular camp program as an antecedent toward youth civic engagement. In their review of the literature, they found four skills that emerged as necessary for successful civic engagement: collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and management and leadership skills (Mainieri & Anderson, 2015). These are all skills that teen leaders hone at 4-H Camp while working in partnership with caring adults to deliver a quality camping experience for younger youth (Halsall et al., 2016). Mainieri and Anderson (2015) interviewed ten YMCA Teens Leading and Connecting day camp participants ages 13-16. Campers reported learning the leadership and civic engagement skills that were expressly taught in the skill-building sessions and applied in the community service activities incorporated into the camp (Mainieri & Anderson, 2015). The study showed many factors, such as group bonding and a sense of belonging, and it reflected additional outcomes that mirrored the objectives of the specific camping program studied. Similar studies of other camping programs may help gauge gains from the camping environment in leadership and civic engagement skills. This study explored the experiences that 4-H Camp teen leaders identified that motivated them toward volunteering in their camp leadership roles.

Camp, as a context, can help reduce disparities among youth and put them all on equal

footing within the camping environment (Garst et al., 2011). This equalizer becomes particularly salient when considering camp as a precursor to youth contribution in light of Godfrey and Cherng's (2016) study of 12,240 15-year-old youth from 137 counties throughout the United States, where they analyzed socioeconomic status and income inequality within the youth's geographical region as a contextual factor in levels of civic engagement. Godfrey and Cherng (2016) found that youth living in counties with more income disparity tended to volunteer more frequently and that youth of lower socioeconomic status placed a higher value on the importance of volunteering – a distinctly opposite finding from similar research conducted among adult populations. Organized camping creates an equalizing context for youth where disparities are minimized because youth sleep in the same spaces, eat the same meals, do the same activities, and have the same opportunities (Garst et al., 2011). Camp is also a place where youth reshape their identities (Garst et al., 2011; Henderson et al., 2007; Wilson et al., 2019). Identity formation at camp is one skill that Wilson et al. (2019) found that former campers attributed as being developed at camp and transferable to other contexts. Identity formation has been closely linked with motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Nolen et al., 2015) and prosocial behaviors (Ramey et al., 2017), such as helping others. Of the 64 former campers (average age of 18) interviewed in a stratified sample of 22 camps accredited by the ACA, Wilson et al. (2019) remarked that when pressed, many of the respondents noted that the skills learned at camp would most likely have been learned in other contexts eventually, but that the intense nature of camp sped up the process and helped them develop the identified skills at an earlier age. The camping experience itself may become infused as part of this developing identity (McClatchey et al., 2021). McClatchey et al. (2021) conducted a qualitative study with eight former campers at a bereavement camp for youth who later returned as volunteer counselors. Following semi-structured interviews, the

three-member research team coded the data and developed themes and subthemes accordingly. One theme that stood out when discussing the volunteer experience was that of identity. The former campers, now recent volunteer counselors, felt a close bond to the bereavement camp because of their experiences first as campers and then as counselors, so much so that it had become part of them (McClatchey et al., 2021). As an equalizing context (Garst et al., 2011) and a place that helps youth figure out who they are (McClatchey et al., 2021, Wilson et al., 2019), the camping context is significant in youth development. It may be a precursor to contribution for some youth.

Although much of their research focused and parent-teen relationships, Callina et al. (2014) found that parents and other important non-parental adults could help promote tendencies toward civic engagement among adolescents by developing and maintaining positive and trusting relationships with teens. Callina et al. (2014) used data from waves three through six of the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development (Lerner & Lerner, 2013) and used a growth mixture modeling approach to examine the connection of trust and hopeful future expectations to how youth engage in and value contribution. They used data from 1,432 youth who participated in at least two years of data collection from waves three through six to examine the youths' future hopeful expectations, trust relationships with parents, and youth contribution (Callina et al., 2014). Building trust between teens and significant adults in their lives was noted as a particularly important component in teen community engagement in their late teen years (Callina et al., 2014) and is critical in developmental relationships (Pekel et al., 2018). The study's findings showed that trusting relationships seemed linked to having higher levels of hope for the future for most of the youth (80.9%). These hope-trust profiles did not yield clear results regarding their influence on youth contribution. Although youth who fell into the two groups of

higher hope-trust profiles had scores slightly above the mean for contribution, the contribution scores for the group with a moderate hope-trust profile were higher than for the group with the highest hope-trust profile, but not significantly (Callina et al., 2014). Even though Callina et al. (2014) believed the results point to a connection between the development of trust in parent and youth relationships, hopeful future expectations, and contribution, they readily admitted that more study was needed, especially regarding different types of trust relationships. Wray-Lake and Abrams (2020) studied 87 urban youth of color from inner-city neighborhoods in Rochester, New York, and discovered that when youth developed a mistrust of adults, they tended to avoid civic engagement. However, when they found safe spaces where they could develop positive, trusting relationships with adults, they were more open to helping others (Wray-Lake & Abrams, 2020). They used a mixed-method approach but relied primarily on qualitative interview data. Youth-adult relationships, particularly ones built upon trust, seem particularly important when considering youth contribution. Relationships, trust, skill-building, and recognition of those skills are all interconnected in the camping environment (Meadows & Garst, 2001), particularly among teen leaders and the adults working in partnership with them (Bird & Subramaniam, 2018).

4-H Camp Teen Leadership

4-H Camp teen leaders play a vital role in program delivery, supervision, mentoring, and relationship building (Ferrari & Arnett, 2011). These teens are empowered by the adults with whom they work to lead, mentor, and supervise younger youth (Bird & Subramaniam, 2018). Not only are these teens instrumental in program delivery, but they also experience growth and skill-building (Ferrari & Arnett, 2011; Leff et al., 2015; Nicholson & Klem, 2011). 4-H Camp teen leaders also, directly and indirectly, provide social and emotional support to campers and peers (Epley et al., 2017).

Virginia 4-H Camp Staffing Structure

Virginia 4-H Camps involve both paid and volunteer staff in program delivery (Meadows & Garst, 2001). Each 4-H Center has permanent, paid staff who focus on the year-round operation of the facility and year-round programming. During the summer, the 4-H Centers hire program staff members who teach the more high-risk classes such as swimming, riflery, high ropes, etc., and focus on the broad programming needs of each week. The county and city clusters, which come to camp for one week during the summer, recruit and train adult and teen leaders who volunteer to serve in leadership roles (Meadows & Garst, 2001). These volunteers supplement the classes offered, supervise campers, and work in partnership with the paid summer program staff to deliver quality programs that result in positive experiences for the campers (Meadows & Garst, 2001).

4-H Camp teen leaders, as the teen staff members are called, have a huge responsibility and are held to high standards of behavior (Meadows & Garst, 2001). They spend many hours training and preparing for the week. They help evaluate camp when it is over. They work long, hard hours during the week of camp serving *in loco parentis* (in place of parents) (Meadows & Garst, 2001). Often, they pay a fee to do all of this. Most, but not all, 4-H Camp teen leaders are recruited from within the 4-H program (S. Fisher, Personal Communication, January 29, 2020).

Transformative Learning and Other Benefits of 4-H Camp Teen Leadership

Transformative learning occurs when learners change behaviors because of what they have learned (Leff et al., 2015). Garst et al. (2009), Leff et al. (2015), and Femrite and Flatt (2016) all point to transformative learning among camp staff. Noting that not all 4-H Camps utilize the same structure, Femrite and Flatt (2016) described a transformative leadership model as a more fully engaging model for teen camp staff. In this model, teen leaders plan and lead

camp activities. They prepare for these leadership experiences during the extensive training and planning sessions conducted before they assume their leadership roles at camp (Femrite & Flatt, 2016). This transformative leadership model is what Virginia 4-H uses in partnering with 4-H Camp teen leaders (Meadows & Garst, 2001), although it is not labeled as such.

Femrite and Flatt (2016) compared two 4-H Camp teen leader training models among 4-H Camp teen leaders in Missouri in 2014. Nineteen youth participated in a modified Youth Experiencing Success 2.0 survey, ten later participating in one of two focus groups. One focus group comprised the four youth who had trained under the older program guide model and the newer transformative leadership model. The other comprised six youth who had trained under only the transformative leadership model (Femrite & Flat, 2016). Results from their content analysis of the transcripts showed that using the transformative leadership model resulted in 4-H Camp teen leaders who felt more aware of the unique challenges and responsibilities of camp leadership and who transformed their way of thinking and leading as a result (Femrite & Flat, 2016). This change sometimes pushed the teens outside of their comfort zones, but the push was positive in terms of their growth and development (Femrite & Flat, 2016).

4-H Camp teen leaders also develop a heightened sense of responsibility and gain life skills (Bird & Subramaniam, 2018). Bird and Subramaniam (2018) sampled 28 4-H Camp teen leaders from six different California 4-H Camps using focus groups and site observations to learn how teen staff perceived supports and opportunities at camp and to learn about outcomes from camp participation. Site observations showed that the camp environments all had components of positive youth development. The teens were in partnership with the adults, they had significant roles, they were part of the decision-making process, and they were empowered to make meaningful contributions to the camping program (Bird & Subramaniam, 2018). Most

noteworthy in the analysis of the focus group data was that teens repeatedly noted their increased sense of responsibility and how they were able to build skills such as communication, teamwork, organization, and an appreciation for working with others different from themselves (Bird & Subramaniam, 2018). The youth also noted the support roles adults took at camp, allowing the teens to provide the primary leadership but always being encouraging and available to provide help, guidance, and overall supervision (Bird & Subramaniam, 2018). These findings support research from Garst et al. (2011) that shows teen staff gain as much benefit from the camping experience as campers. Social and life skill development can influence teens and young adults such that camp becomes a place where they redefine themselves (Garst et al., 2011). Lewis et al. (2017) similarly found that 4-H Camp teen leaders reported significant outcomes stemming from their 4-H Camp leadership experience. Lewis et al. (2017) surveyed 172 4-H Camp teen leaders from nine California 4-H Camps. They found that these teens scored significantly higher in the paired t-tests on all seven skills tested in the retrospective pre-and post-test survey (Lewis et al., 2017). These skills included teamwork, communication, objectivity, planning, teaching, leading, and sharing opinions with adults (Lewis et al., 2017). These skills match those Mainieri and Anderson (2015) identified as important to successful civic engagement: collaboration, communication, critical thinking, and management and leadership skills. Developing these skills was part of the experiences described by the teens in this study as helping to motivate them to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders.

Engaging teens as partners in 4-H Camp delivery gives them more opportunities for growth and understanding and, therefore, more opportunities for transformative learning. 4-H Camp teen leaders have an important role in the 4-H camping program. They have immense responsibilities. They also gain many skills and have experiences that can help them shape their

identities. 4-H professionals, recognizing the hefty responsibilities teen leaders have at camp and the enormity of teens' potential for growth, must provide quality training and develop and maintain supportive relationships with them. Understanding teen motivations to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders will help 4-H professionals and others as they work to create positive developmental opportunities for youth.

Contribution

Teenagers are at a growth stage where they are poised to contribute to their communities (Ballard & Syme, 2015), and as a part of thriving through hopeful expectations, they may need to feel that they are part of something bigger (Arnold, 2018). In the Five Cs model of PYD, contribution plays a prominent role as the resulting sixth C (Geldhof et al., 2015). RDST suggests that the bidirectional individual ⟵⟶ context relationship may influence a young person's willingness to contribute in the three areas of self, family, and community (Geldhof et al., 2015). While studying volunteerism in adults of all ages, Yamashita et al. (2017) identified that socioemotional gratification through volunteerism at earlier stages of life tended to bring about continued volunteerism. They also found that the only motivational factor that remained unchanged throughout the lifespan was serving the community (Yamashita et al., 2017). The connection to community is a common thread in volunteer research. Geldhof et al. (2015) identified community as one area of youth volunteerism with significance in terms of youth interaction within their environment. Hernantes et al. (2020) identified volunteerism as a way for teenagers to connect with their community. Fuligni (2019) pointed to the neural and biological connection to an adolescent's motivation and capacity to contribute to others but also noted that a strong social component made it necessary to study contributing behavior from many facets.

Teen Volunteerism

Analyzing survey data from 56 youth who participated in the 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development in grades six, nine, and 12, Hershberg et al. (2014) found that teens felt very strongly about the importance of volunteerism and intended to volunteer but did not always follow through. This intent to volunteer fits in with the 4-H Thriving indicator of developing a sense of purpose. A sense of purpose can be considered as intending to accomplish or accomplishing something of worth, something meaningful (Arnold, 2018; Malin et al., 2017). Malin et al. (2015) described a sense of purpose as a meaningful life goal. In cyclical fashion, thriving through developing a sense of purpose may lead to community engagement (Burrow et al., 2018). Malin et al. (2017) conducted a study with 1578 high school seniors representing a diverse population from seven California high schools. Then they sampled 480 of these same youth two years later to learn about changes in their levels of civic engagement. Through t-tests, multivariate regression, and mixed model analyses, Malin et al. (2017) found that all forms of civic engagement, including service to the community, declined after high school even though intent did not. Data analysis suggested that the students who engaged in community service activities in high school because of reasons that were not self-serving, tended to experience less decline in later community service engagement (Malin et al., 2017). This evidence suggests that helping youth internalize the benefits of volunteering and the satisfaction derived from it may help them integrate the ideal into their sense of purpose.

Volunteerism or contributing to something bigger than themselves is one way teens can develop a sense of purpose with the dimensions of intention, motivation, and activity or engagement (Malin et al., 2017). Malin et al. (2017) identified empathy and compassion as two emotional responses that lead to developing purpose in adolescence. Similarly, Lawford and

Ramey (2017) identified the youth development components of initiative, self-esteem, and empathy for others as factors in youth contribution. They linked youth contribution to initiative and described initiative as motivation combined with the ability to progress toward a set goal (Lawford & Ramey, 2017). Lawford and Ramey (2017) administered a survey to a sample of 236 young adult undergraduate students and the same survey to 160 adolescents ages 13-20 who were actively involved in the decision-making processes of the community organizations of which they were a part (Lawford & Ramey, 2017). Their analysis showed that while the adolescent group scored lower in self-esteem, they also had a higher rate of community involvement than the young adult sample (Lawford & Ramey, 2017). The young adults scored higher in initiative (Lawford & Ramey, 2017). What was consistent between the two groups was what Lawford and Ramey (2017) termed generative concern for contributing to future generations and contribution to benefit their respective communities. They also linked their findings to PYD in that youth contribution could be cultivated as a positive asset (Lawford & Ramey, 2017). Taylor-Collins et al. (2019) involved 4518 youth, ages 16-20, from the United Kingdom in a quantitative study using an online questionnaire with instruments adapted from previous studies to learn about contributing factors in youth making a habit of volunteerism or social action as it is termed in the UK. Most of the youth in the study were ages 16 (40%) and 17 (42%). Taylor-Collins et al. (2019) found that 76% of those who made a habit of volunteering, meaning they reported having volunteered within the last year and planned to continue volunteering, reported having "the skills, time, opportunity, and confidence" (p. 105) to volunteer. This number compared to only 61% in the non-habit group who had volunteered within the last year but had no significant plans to do so again within the next year (Taylor-collins et al., 2019). Another factor contributing to teen volunteerism for the habit group was

having friends and family members who also volunteered and who supported and encouraged them, with friends being a more significant influence than parents (Taylor-Collins et al., 2019). Youth who had not engaged in volunteer activities during the past year reported that of their friends, they were only aware of about 27% who volunteered during the past year (Taylor-Collins et al., 2019). Two key conclusions from this study were that developing a habit of volunteering is something that friends, parents, educators, youth professionals, and faith-based groups can influence and that helping young people believe that they have the time, skills, and opportunity to volunteer as well as confidence in their abilities can greatly influence youth developing a habit of volunteerism (Taylor-Collins et al., 2019). Nordstrom et al. (2022) echoed the idea that having confidence in their abilities is something that can help youth move from feelings of valuing contribution and being inspired to contribute to actually being motivated to act. They conducted a qualitative study with 18 youth (15 female and three male) involved in a philanthropic organization in the Midwest United States. They interviewed the youth and their adult mentors, observed them in action, and collected data from archival documents. To analyze the data, they coded the data using an abductive grounded process. Among other findings, their data showed that youth who were given safe spaces with positive mentoring relationships, where they could develop a sense of efficacy and feel supported in their decisions, were more likely to overcome feelings of inadequacy that may prevent them from volunteering (Nordstrom et al., 2022). They also identified what they termed high-quality relationships between youth and adults as crucial in helping youth reflect on and act upon their sense of purpose (Nordstrom et al., 2022).

Reasons Teens Volunteer. Volunteerism among teens is on the rise, partly due to high school requirements to obtain volunteer hours before graduation, partly due to the benefits of

being able to record volunteer experience on college or job applications, and partly due to an increased desire among this age group to volunteer (Bode, 2017; Malin et al., 2017). Not only is volunteerism on the rise in the US, but it is also increasing globally (Gul, 2020; Taylor-Collins et al., 2019). Gul (2020) cited reasons for the increase as concern for others, wanting to make the world better, becoming more employable, filling time, and seeking social justice. Taylor-Collins et al. (2019) cited global initiatives towards volunteerism by the United Nations and initiatives by the Canadian education system, the Australian government, the European Union, and an extensive social action campaign in the UK as possible reasons for increased volunteer efforts internationally.

Teenagers are at a stage of greater independence and seeking purpose and can make significant contributions through their volunteer efforts (Fuligni, 2019). Helping others is a part of the pro-social aspect of development (Cotney & Banerjee, 2019), and doing so can lead to great satisfaction despite the hard work involved (Damon, 2008). Deci and Ryan (2004) used self-determination theory to address one's need to contribute to the group, gain a sense of accomplishment, and exert independence. These needs may influence a teenager's decision to volunteer. Malin et al. (2015) found that an important factor in teen volunteerism was simply being invited to volunteer, particularly by adults. Hernantes et al. (2020) conducted a scoping review of 15 research articles on teenage volunteerism. They found that nearly all of the service activities involved youth working in partnership with or under the supervision of adults.

Adult influence meshes with Lerner, Johnson, et al.'s (2015) suggestion that a person's culture, as well as adult influence, impacts a young person's desire to contribute. Culture is one facet of a person's context and plays a heavy role in family attitudes toward volunteerism (Silke et al., 2018). These shared practices, customs, beliefs, and attitudes contribute to the environment

or context that is the backdrop for teens making decisions about helping others (Carlo & Padilla-Walker, 2020). A teen may be inclined to volunteer due to being asked (Malin et al., 2015) but may stick with the volunteer role due to enjoying it and finding a sense of meaningful accomplishment or purpose (Bode, 2017).

Volunteerism and Context. Studies on youth volunteerism and the motivation behind it are few. Hardy et al. (2015) found in their study of 419 youth ages 15-18 that intrinsic motivators were more reliable in predicting behaviors than controlled motivators and that the more autonomous the motivation, the more likely the predictor for pro-social behaviors such as community volunteerism or charitable donations. Lerner, Johnson, et al. (2015) identified a need for further study regarding volunteerism specifically related to diverse cultures and parental influence. Even though their research was with adults, Yamashita et al. (2017) also indicated a need for further research on volunteer motivation regarding cultural, family, sociodemographic, and other contextual factors that may influence it. Yamashita et al. (2017) pointed to a severe lack overall of research studies regarding motivation to volunteer.

Teen Volunteerism and Positive Youth Development

Teenagers are at a stage of greater independence and seeking purpose and can make more significant contributions through their volunteer efforts (Fuligni, 2019). Helping others is a part of development (Dahl et al., 2018; Salice & Satne, 2020). Ryan and Deci (2002) used self-determination theory to address one's need to contribute to the group, gain a sense of accomplishment, and exert independence. Ramey et al. (2017) noted the impact of positive youth development on youth contribution and explored how the level of youth-adult partnership (YAP) influenced their contribution. Hershberg et al. (2015) also described a linkage between youth contribution and YAP. Ramey et al. (2017) used data from a previous study discussed earlier

about youth contribution (Lawford & Ramey, 2017) and included all 160 youth in the adolescent sample but narrowed down the young adult sample to 128 undergraduates who indicated they had been involved in YAPs. They found independent predicting links between a high degree of YAP and contribution tendencies and a high degree of psychological engagement in activities and youth contribution. They speculated that these youth may feel more confident and empowered to contribute to their communities, and they may also be afforded more opportunities because of their YAPs (Ramey et al., 2017). Malin et al. (2015) found that an important part of a teen's decision to volunteer was simply being asked to do so, particularly by adults. This concept resonates with the idea of adult influence. The idea of adult influence also ties into Lerner, Johnson, et al.'s (2015) focus on the role of parents and culture as part of the developmental context that influences a person's desire to contribute. Lerner, Johnson, et al. (2015) also stated that further study is needed in this area, particularly among diverse audiences and ages.

4-H Teen Leadership

4-H, as with many other PYD programs, has as one of its goals to help youth develop life skills such as confidence, compassion, and leadership (National 4-H Council, 2020b). 4-H helps youth "make their lives and communities better" (National 4-H Council, 2020a, para. 2). This wording has been streamlined recently from the previous wording which can still be found on the homepages of many state 4-H programs, including that of Virginia. It describes the mission of 4-H as helping youth become "self-directing, contributing, and productive members of society" (VPI&SU, 2020, Mission). The 4-H program keeps youth engaged as they age by providing them with opportunities for meaningful contribution through leadership experiences. As teens mature, they are given more autonomy in planning and executing experiences, but always with adult support. Carver and Enfield (2006) described the two roles of junior leader and teen leader

in the 4-H program. The junior leader is an assistant to the adult, where the adult takes primary leadership of a program; as the teen grows in skill, confidence, and maturity, the young person becomes a teen leader who is in charge of the activity or program with the adult in an assistant role (Carver & Enfield, 2006). The California 4-H program differentiates between the two roles as the junior leader assisting and the teen leader providing primarily leadership responsibilities (Regents of the University of California, 2021b).

Within the same pattern of practice but packaged slightly differently is the teens-as-teachers concept. This practice puts teens in the role of the lead teacher in content delivery (Worker et al., 2019). Worker et al. (2019) conducted a study where they interviewed 32 youth who were teens-as-teachers in five different California 4-H programs to determine their growth from participating in that role. Although not the focus of the study, they found that 28 out of the 32 youth involved initially volunteered because they were asked by either an adult or a friend (Worker et al., 2019). This discovery supported Malin et al.'s (2015) findings of the role played by adults in teen volunteerism. Teens may have initially volunteered because of an external influence, but they continued for reasons including having fun, building connections with others, and feeling that they were doing something meaningful (Worker et al., 2019). These findings caused Worker et al. (2019) to suggest that even though the sixth C of contribution is thought to arise from the other five Cs, perhaps the very act of contributing further develops a young person's competence, confidence, connection, caring, and character.

Limitations

Reviewing the literature revealed many studies on positive youth development and the theories supporting it. Topics connected to why youth might volunteer to be 4-H Camp teen leaders included information on adolescent growth and development, motivational factors, and

research on contribution. Each reference provided information related to a specific topic. In some cases, there was a degree of connectivity between the topics; however, a significant limitation involved piecing together studies on many different subjects to synthesize information about the overarching research questions. Another major limitation was the minimal amount of scholarly research related to the specific topics of 4-H Camp and 4-H teen contribution. Expanding the research base to the larger domain of positive youth development also yielded its own set of limitations, such as those expressed by Ciocanel et al. (2017) when they described the difficulty in comparing PYD studies that varied so much in what they measured and how they measured it.

Need for Further Research

Understanding what motivates teens to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders will provide valuable insight to 4-H professionals, camp staff, teens themselves, and their families and communities. It is a topic that has not previously been explored. However, research does exist on tangential subjects of 4-H teen leader developmental experiences, 4-H Camp teen training, 4-H camper outcomes, motivation, 4-H as a developmental context, and positive youth development. Additional research is needed about why teens volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia.

Void of Research Concerning Motivation for Youth to Become Camp Staff/Teen Leaders

There is a void of research concerning motivation for youth to become camp staff, particularly 4-H Camp teen leaders. In their study of the developmental experiences of 4-H teen leaders, Carter and Kotrlik (2008) identified a need for further research on why teens return as teen leaders year after year. Bird and Subramaniam (2018) suggested that understanding the growth teens experience at 4-H Camp may inform practitioners about their experiences contributing to this growth and provide insight into the application of PYD practices. Studies showing the benefits teens receive from being a 4-H Camp teen leader may help teens and the

adult influencers in their lives understand the importance of this experience (Nicholson & Klem, 2011).

Motivation and Camp Leadership

The need for more understanding about motivation and camp leaders is also evident in the larger context of camping in general. In a study of seasonal paid camp staff retention, Zigmond (2018) stated that understanding why staff members return in successive years could help camp directors with staff retention, which often leads to a better camp program since the leaders are more experienced. Richmond et al. (2020) echoed these sentiments with a call for understanding motivation, beyond compensation, for paid seasonal camp staff to return in successive years. Even though motivation for paid and volunteer staff may differ, there could also be some overlap. Annesi (2020) raised questions about how a young person's experiences as a camper, and the benefits derived from them, may influence future leadership. Since most 4-H Camp teen leaders were at one time 4-H campers (Bird & Subramaniam, 2018; S. Fisher, Personal Communication, January 29, 2020), it begs delving deeper into understanding how these experiences may influence motivation to become leaders. Further research could explore if camper experiences ignite a spark that shapes a young person's path toward future leadership. Nurturing this spark through appropriate support, developmental activities, and experiences may provide motivation for future endeavors (Ben-Eliyahu et al., 2014; Femrite & Flatt, 2016). This research adds to the 4-H Camping literature. It may help practitioners, parents, and others better understand the experiences that motivate the young people in this study to become 4-H Camp teen leaders.

Camping Outcomes

Camp experiences have outcomes that are far-reaching (ACA, 2005; Henderson, 2018;

Whittington & Garst, 2018). Studies have shown a linkage between positive camp counselor experiences and a benefit to not just their campers and the overall camp community but also to other communities and contexts of which these teens are a part (Ferrari & Arnett, 2011; Leff et al., 2015). A better understanding of experiences motivating young people to become 4-H Camp teen leaders has broad implications for the 4-H camping community and also touches on the individual, family, and broader communities to which the young people belong.

Summary

A review of the literature indicates that teens have reached a developmental stage where they are more capable of meaningful contribution and are ready to volunteer (Atkins & Harmon, 2016; Fuligni, 2019). Research is lacking on why many volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders, but related research provides some ideas. Their motivations for volunteering may be complex, influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic factors (Hardy et al., 2014). A teen may simply be inclined to volunteer as a result of being asked (Malin et al., 2015) but may stick with the volunteer role due to enjoying it and finding a sense of meaningful accomplishment or purpose (Bode, 2017). According to Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory, these teens may also be influenced by feelings of autonomy, competence, and relatedness.

4-H Camp is an important delivery mode within the national 4-H program. Even though each state has its own process for running the camping program, 4-H Camp, like all 4-H programs, is couched in the overarching theme of PYD. Recognizing that various frameworks for PYD exist, 4-H relies heavily on the Five Cs model, the Essential Elements of 4-H, the Targeting Life Skills model, and the emerging 4-H Thriving model. These models all focus on guiding youth to reach their full potential through experiential learning processes where they can grow and mature. Each model has within it an opportunity for youth to progress sequentially as

they master skills, including leadership skills. Teen volunteerism at 4-H Camp is one way that older youth can contribute, thereby progressing in their development and giving of themselves to others. They put their leadership skills into practice and contribute to their communities and the camping community during their week of 4-H Camp. However, there is a lack of literature directly focused on why teens volunteer to be 4-H Camp Teen Leaders as opposed to or in addition to other forms of volunteerism. This study narrows the gap in the literature, thereby giving it empirical value. It also has practical value because it helps 4-H professionals as they work with young people and potentially incorporate similar experiences to those described by the teens in this study to aid in 4-H Camp teen leader recruitment.

Garst et al. (2016), and Lerner, Johnson, et al. (2015) called for additional research on influencing factors linking the developmental context and resulting outcomes. Seeing the same missing piece connecting context to outcomes, Arnold (2018) has initiated research on the 4-H Thriving model within the last few years to help explain what specifically happens within the developmental context of 4-H that promotes the 5Cs and leads to developmental outcomes. The developmental context of camp and other settings of which these youth are a part is important when considering what motivates these young people to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders through the lens of relational developmental systems theory which states that there is a bidirectional relationship between the context and the individual (Overton, 2015). What is it that motivates teens to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders? Most of these leaders have been involved in the 4-H program previously but freely choose to participate in many hours of training, camp planning, conducting the program, and evaluating the camp week. Why do they do it? Why do they return year after year? Further study is needed to answer these questions.

CHAPTER THREE: METHODS

Overview

This qualitative, phenomenological study examined why young people volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. Research shows that teenagers may be motivated by internal desires as well as external factors (Bode, 2017). Teens feel very strongly about the importance of volunteering, although they do not always follow through (Hershberg et al., 2014). This study addressed the problem of why young people volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. This chapter describes the research design and methods, research questions, participants, procedure, and data analysis plan.

Research Design

The purpose of this qualitative, phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences that motivate teenagers to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. This complex topic required interpretation from the teenage perspective. The goal of qualitative research is to understand and interpret (Gaudet & Robert, 2018). Because this study was of human experience and behavior, it focused on qualitative description rather than measuring quantitative aspects (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Moustakas, 1994). Qualitative inquiry allows for a richer description of the phenomenon under study (Erlandson et al., 1993), in this case, experiences that motivate youth to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. In phenomenology, the researcher must genuinely understand the experiences described by the participants and make meaning of them (Moustakas, 1994), and that is what I have done in this study regarding the lived experiences that motivate teens to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. I gained greater insight into the topic by discovering participants' perspectives about their experiences, both structural and textural, surrounding the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994).

Transcendental phenomenology is the study of how things appear after all preconceptions have been eliminated, and the true nature of the phenomenon can be described in both context and meaning (Moustakas, 1994). A phenomenon is the entanglement of the subjective and objective, meaning that what a person perceives about the phenomenon is crucial to understanding the phenomenon itself (Moustakas, 1994); therefore, it was essential for the teen participants in the study to provide rich descriptions of their experiences and feelings associated with them. These dual concepts are what Moustakas (1994) referred to as noema (structural) and noesis (textural). Krysztofiak (2020) explained noema as the content or appearance of the act, while noesis is the feeling evoked by or the mental reference associated with the act. Both noema and noesis are tied to the experience and how a person makes meaning of it (Moustakas, 1994). As one reflects more and more on the experience, noema informs noesis and vice versa so that additional layers of meaning are developed, and the experience becomes more defined (Moustakas, 1994).

Qualitative research tends to be more inductive, while quantitative research tends to be more deductive (Check & Schutt, 2012). This inductive nature means that I used the data to assign meaning (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Gaudet & Robert, 2018) and identify themes that emerged through data analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). In studying the problem of why teenagers in Virginia volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders, I did not have a set relationship or theory to be tested, as is common with quantitative studies (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). Instead, I used a dual theoretical lens of relational developmental systems theory (Overton, 2015) combined with self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2004) to make meaning of rich descriptions provided by the teens themselves. The theoretical lens provided a backdrop to the research and helped shape my questions and areas of focus (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

Interviews combined with observation during the first phase of data collection, followed by focus group data to follow up on emergent themes during the second phase, enabled me to capture descriptions from the teens themselves. Creswell and Poth (2018) listed several characteristics of qualitative research which are inherent in the design of this study: research taking place in the field (4-H Camp), using multiple methods to collect data (interviews, observations, and focus groups), learning about the participant perspective, and having an emergent design. Therefore, the phenomenological design was the most appropriate for this study. Specifically, this study used Moustakas' transcendental phenomenology, which focuses on intentionality in describing a phenomenon as perceived in one's consciousness (Moustakas, 1994). Moustakas credited Husserl (2012) with opening the door to a more subjective way of research. Husserl (2012) described phenomenology as a new way of looking at things in order to ascribe meaning to them. Husserl built upon foundational work by Kant and Descartes (Husserl, 2004; Moustakas, 1994).

Research Questions

The research questions for this study were designed to discover why teenagers volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia.

Central Research Question

What lived experiences do teens identify that motivate them to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders?

Sub-Question One

What experiences may be reflective of the tenets of positive youth development (PYD)?

Sub-Question Two

What beliefs regarding benefits of being a 4-H Camp teen leader contribute to the teens'

motivation?

Sub-Question Three

What experiences motivate teens to continue in 4-H Camp leadership roles after the first year?

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Setting and Participants

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This research study was situated within the context of 4-H Camp. There are six 4-H Educational Centers in Virginia where youth throughout the Commonwealth spend five days and four nights at 4-H Camp. The camp setting is important to note as well as the teen research participants who took part in the study.

Setting

Since the participants involved in the study were current Virginia 4-H Camp teen leaders, it was natural to conduct the bulk of the research during the 4-H Camps. Interviews and observations occurred at Virginia's 4-H Educational Centers during the 2022 camping season. Each 4-H Center is accredited by the American Camping Association (Fisher & Iden, 2013). This accreditation means that the 4-H Centers not only meet safety guidelines but also go a step further in following practices to create an environment optimum for cultivating positive experiences for campers (ACA, 2020). Each of the six 4-H Centers is unique, some having very historical cabins where the youth sleep and some being more modern conference centers with lodges or dormitory-style facilities. However, they all share commonalities, such as a dining hall, lodging and bathroom facilities, a swimming pool, rifle and archery ranges, a water body for certain classes such as canoeing and/or fishing, and a campfire area. Virginia 4-H youth, teens, and adults are assigned to camp at a specific 4-H Center by geographical location (VPI&SU, 2021b). Although having representation from each 4-H Center was not essential to this study, I

included at least two participants from each center. Virginia's 4-H Centers are each a non-profit corporation with its own board of directors (VPI&SU, 2021b). Each 4-H Center works in partnership with Virginia Cooperative Extension to deliver quality 4-H camping programs to the youth of Virginia (VPI&SU, 2021b). Because each 4-H Center serves a particular geographical area, camp takes place all summer with different camping clusters (county and city 4-H programs) each spending five days and four nights of camp at the designated facility. Each summer, over 17,000 youth participate in the Virginia 4-H Camping program (VPI&SU, 2021a), with 1,200-1,400 being 4-H Camp teen leaders (S. Fisher, personal communication, April 16, 2020). These teens report directly to the adult volunteers and 4-H Extension Agents at camp; however, the paid program staff, most of whom are college-age, also provide supervision and guidance. The teens themselves supervise, encourage, and lead the younger campers in their care.

I visited each 4-H Center during the summer of 2022 to conduct interviews and make observations. Following the conclusion of the camping season, I engaged five of the participants in focus group conversations via videoconferencing due to the large geographical area involved. Small focus group numbers allowed each participant to share detailed responses.

Participants

Participants in this study were typical 4-H Camp teen leaders ages 15-19 due to the age requirements for 4-H Camp teen leadership and the criterion of being in at least their second year of service. Between 1,200-1,400 teenagers volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia each summer. In 2022, which is representative of a typical camping season, the teen leaders statewide were 52% female, 43% male, 2% other, and 4% preferred not to say. The racial breakdown was 83% White, 11% Black or African American, 2% Asian, 1% American Indian, 1% Pacific

Islander, and the remaining 3% represented multiple races. Three percent of these youth reported

as Hispanic or Latino ethnicity, with another 7% not reporting their ethnicity. The ages of 4-H

Camp teen leaders in 2022 were 14 (23%), 15 (25%), 16 (25%), 17 (13%), 18 (12%), and 19

(2%) (S. Fisher, Personal Communication, September 20, 2022). Sixteen youth took part in this

qualitative study since the emphasis was on obtaining in-depth information about the experiences

of the individual participants, and therefore, the sample size needed to be small (Creswell, 2014;

Schreier, 2018). The participants included nine females, six males, one of whom mentioned that

he used he/they pronouns, and one nonbinary youth. The racial breakdown included three

African American or Black youth, nine Caucasian or White youth, and two multicultural youth.

One of the multicultural youth indicated a combination of Asian and White, and the other

indicated Black and Hispanic. Two youth were of Hispanic ethnicity. No other youth identified

with a particular ethnic group.

Saturation occurs when new information does not generate additional themes or

understanding (Creswell, 2014; Schreier, 2018). Lincoln and Guba (1985) described this as

sampling to the point of redundancy, where increasing the sample size does not generate new

information. Creswell (2014) cautioned that a large sample size for qualitative research could

become hard to manage when trying to obtain detailed descriptions from participants. Data

saturation occurred early in the study. After the third and fourth site visits, which occurred on

back-to-back days, it became apparent that interviews and observations were not generating new

information. However, wanting representation from each of the six 4-H Centers, I continued with

phase one data collection.

Researcher Positionality

I approached this research in the role of a professional working within the 4-H program. I

am a 4-H Youth Development Extension Agent. As a 4-H Agent, I work with youth in many settings, including 4-H Camp. I recruit and train 4-H Camp teen and adult leaders to work hand-in-hand with the 4-H Center summer program staff.

I grew up in the 4-H program, beginning my 4-H journey in the fourth grade. The summer after eighth grade was my first year attending 4-H Camp. I fell in love with it and have been part of 4-H Camp in one aspect or another for the past 36 years, only missing four summers. My roles at 4-H camp have included that of a camper, teen leader, 4-H Center summer program staff member, and 4-H Agent.

As a professional in the field of positive youth development, I am privileged to work alongside some amazing 4-H Camp teen leaders. Many, but not all, of these teens were previously 4-H campers. There are also many campers who never become 4-H Camp teen leaders. I found myself questioning why some become teen leaders, often returning year after year despite the long hours and hard work, and some do not. This research contributes to existing camp research and fills a gap in the literature on the experiences that motivate young people to be 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. It may help 4-H professionals as they strive to provide appropriate developmental experiences for young people and as they recruit, train, and work with 4-H Camp teen leaders.

Interpretive Framework

I believe that each individual assigns meaning differently, interpreting events within the context in which they occur. Therefore, each attaches a different meaning to those experiences. This interpretive framework is that of constructivism (Hershberg, 2014). Constructivism is appropriate for qualitative studies since it holds that people's knowledge results from their perspective (Rockinson-Szapkiw, 2014). Guba and Lincoln (1994) described constructivism as

people's understanding of information, something which undergoes continual revision as people gain more knowledge and experience.

Philosophical Assumptions

A researcher's philosophical assumptions are the underlying assumptions that guide the research (Rockinson-Szapkiw & Spaulding, 2014). My ontological, epistemological, and axiological positions have shaped this research.

Ontological Assumption

I brought to this study a belief that although there may be similarities, each teen would have different experiences and motivators for volunteering. The belief that each study participant had a story to tell with a unique perspective stems from my biblical worldview of interpreting events with a Christ-like mindset (Mooreland, 2007). Each person is uniquely created by God and given the capacity to think, reason, and act (Genesis 1:26; Job 33:4; Psalm 19:1 *New King James Version*, 1982). Ontology refers to how one perceives reality. Since I view reality as fixed but with multiple understandings and perspectives, I ascribe to Guba and Lincoln's (1994) relativist ontology. Therefore, the relativist ontological perspective shapes my underlying assumptions about the research topic.

Epistemological Assumption

Qualitative researchers interpret data through an inductive process where they make meaning of it (Creswell & Creswell, 2018; Gaudet & Robert, 2018; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The researcher is intertwined in the data collection and analysis process and is, therefore, part of the inquiry, not separate from it (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). Therefore, my epistemological assumption is one of researcher and research participant subjectivity, where I discovered and developed the findings concurrently with data collection and analysis (Guba & Lincoln, 1994).

Axiological Assumption

Axiology focuses on the influence of the researcher's values on the research (Knight, 2006; Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As a 4-H professional, I value the field of positive youth development. I believe that when youth are given the right supports in a quality PYD program, they have the potential to thrive. However, this thriving may look different for different youth, as each is unique, with unique experiences, backgrounds, and developmental relationships. The youth in this study each had their own stories to tell, their own experiences and viewpoints. Each of these perspectives was equally important in discovering the lived experiences that motivate the youth in this study to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders.

Researcher's Role

I am a Senior Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development, with Virginia Cooperative Extension. My role as a 4-H Agent working with 4-H Camp teen leaders made the problem very real and also brought clarity to the benefit of researching this area. Moustakas (1994) indicated that a researcher's personal connection to the problem helps focus the research. As a 4-H Agent, I work with youth in many settings, including 4-H Camp. I recruit and train 4-H Camp teen and adult leaders to work hand-in-hand with the 4-H Center summer program staff. The teens with whom I have a working relationship were not participants in this study. As a 4-H professional, I understand the 4-H terminology teens use and the nuances of 4-H Camp. This understanding of the context is important as it helped me use the proper language and understand what the participants communicated (Erlandson et al., 1994; Roulston & Choi, 2018). I could blend into the camp environment as someone who belonged when making site visits for interviews and observations.

An assumption I brought to the study was that the 4-H teen leaders would each have their

own motivations for volunteering in this role. Some may have been more highly motivated than others, but each had something that drove them to commit to the many hours of training before camp, the long and tiring hours of work at camp, and follow-up evaluation and debriefing after camp. Research suggests that most 4-H Camp teen leaders were 4-H campers at one point (Bird & Subramaniam, 2017; S. Fisher, Personal Communication, January 29, 2020) and, in fact, all 16 participants attended 4-H Camp as a camper prior to volunteering as a teen leader. Their participation in the camper role ranged from one to five years.

Within this phenomenological study, as the researcher, I conducted interviews, observed participants in action, and facilitated the focus group discussions. I transcribed each interview and focus group discussion, coded and analyzed the data, incorporating observation field notes and interview and focus group memos. As the researcher and human instrument, I interpreted the data and critically analyzed it (Kincheloe & McLaren, 1994) to draw conclusions as they related to this study.

Procedures

I secured IRB approval from Liberty University and a reliance agreement from Virginia Tech. I also secured other needed permissions and approvals from Virginia 4-H and all six 4-H Centers. I then began the field testing interview and focus group questions, recruiting participants and securing parental consent and youth participant assent, collecting and analyzing data, and strengthening the study through triangulation. The description of these steps follows.

Permissions

I secured Institutional Review Board (IRB) permission from Liberty University. Virginia 4-H is a part of Virginia's two land grant universities, Virginia Tech and Virginia State, but Virginia Tech is responsible for 4-H records and safeguarding Virginia's 4-H youth; therefore, I

also needed approval from that institution. Virginia Tech executed a reliance agreement with Liberty for this study. See Appendix B for Liberty University's IRB approval and the reliance agreement between the two institutions. I also secured permission from the Virginia State 4-H Program Leader to conduct research with Virginia 4-H members (Appendix C), and I secured permission from the 4-H Centers to be on property conducting research during the summer of 2022. See Appendix C for site approvals. For youth participants under 18, I obtained a combined form containing participant assent and informed consent from their parent/guardian. I obtained informed consent directly from the youth who were age 18 or 19.

Recruitment Plan

In May and June of 2022, 4-H Agents and Program Assistants from the camping clusters I planned to visit helped me identify and recruit youth participants and secure the proper permissions and documentation. See Appendix D for recruitment materials and Appendix E for combined parental consent and youth assent form and consent form for youth 18 and older.

An average of 1,200-1,400 4-H Camp teen leaders attend camp in leadership roles each summer in Virginia (S. Fisher, personal communication, April 16, 2020), making the sample pool quite large. The sample size was 16 participants. With this type of qualitative research, the emphasis is on obtaining in-depth information and rich descriptions about the experiences of the individual participants, and therefore the sample size needed to be small (Creswell, 2014). This typical, purposive sample involved teens serving in their second through fifth years as 4-H Camp teen leaders. Purposive sampling was appropriate because of the study's interest in the specific population of 4-H Camp teen leaders (Carpenter, 2017). Purposive sampling allowed for selecting research participants because of their unique understanding of the phenomenon (Erlandson et al., 1993), which permitted me to conduct a more in-depth inquiry (Patton, 2002).

The sample was typical because the youth involved in the study represented typical 4-H Camp teen leaders (Creswell, 2014). The sampling strategy used was that of criterion sampling, with all participants meeting certain criteria (Erlandson et al., 1993) of being active teen leaders in at least their second year of service and who possessed good oral communication skills and a willingness to talk to adults with whom they were not familiar. I asked Extension Agents who work with the 4-H Camp teen leaders during the camp weeks to be visited to recommend youth who met these criteria. Youth received an invitation to participate in the study before coming to camp so that they and their parents could review information about the study and make an informed choice about participation. Because SQ3 questioned why the teens returned after their first year, first-year teens were excluded from the study.

Data Collection Plan

Qualitative data collection methods allow the researcher to glean thick descriptions of a phenomenon and to seat these descriptions within the context described by the interviewee (Erlandson et al., 1993). The methods used in this study were interviews, observations, and focus groups. Using three data collection methods strengthened the study through triangulation (Patton, 2002). Data triangulation uses a combination of inquiry approaches in order to glean corroboration of data through various methods (Miles & Huberman, 1994; Patton, 2002). Data triangulation also allows for deepening the understanding of the data through various nuances that emerge during the different approaches to data collection (Patton, 2002). The first method I employed was the individual interview. Moustakas (1994) described interviews as the primary method of data collection for phenomenological studies. Conducting interviews at the beginning of the study invited the research participants to inform the direction of the study by sharing the experiences that motivated them to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. Interviews also provided

the bulk of the information through the rich descriptions generated. Through interviews, the participants assigned meaning to their experiences (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). These interviews helped me match the descriptions provided by the participants to the context surrounding them (Erlandson et al., 1993).

I conducted observations after the interviews to allow me to learn if what the teens said matched what they did (Patton, 2002). Erlandson et al. (1993) described this as seeing what they have said put into action. For this reason, it was important to conduct the interviews before the observations.

Lastly, I brought a smaller number of participants together via Zoom videoconference to participate in focus group discussions after my preliminary analysis of interview and observation data. Conducting focus groups after the interviews and observations enabled the focus group participants to address and expand upon emerging themes (Morgan & Hoffman, 2018). Because participants interacted with each other and built off one another's responses, the focus groups had the potential to yield information not captured in individual interviews (Stewart, 2018). Focus group conversations also give research participants involved in them the opportunity to provide meaningful information in a context related to other participants' views (Patton, 2002).

Individual Interviews (Data Collection Approach #1)

Semi-structured interviews took place during 4-H Camp. The semi-structured interview uses an interview guide with prepared questions as a consistent starting point with each interview, but the questions can be rearranged, adjusted, or expanded upon as directed by the course of the interview (Roulston & Choi, 2018). These questions were open-ended, so participants had to answer with descriptions and their perspectives about the experiences rather than with one-word answers (Johnson, 2017). Using this approach, I had the flexibility to probe

deeper into a participant's response when necessary to learn more about their experiences (Roulston & Choi, 2018). The semi-structured approach has been used successfully in other phenomenological studies where researchers, striving for thick descriptions of the phenomenon under study, were able to ask unique follow-up questions of the participants to better understand their lived experiences. Bartholomew et al. (2019) used the semi-structured interview in their phenomenological qualitative study about counselors' hope for their patients. Kautz (2019) used a semi-structured interview to explore the phenomenon of what it was like for African American youth to experience parental incarceration. Woodley and Lewallen (2021) also employed the semi-structured interview in their phenomenological qualitative study of the lived experiences of Hispanic and Latino nursing students. The semi-structured approach is often used in qualitative studies because it allows the interviewer to gather rich descriptions of the participant's experiences through additional prompting (Johnson, 2017).

Since the semi-structured interviews took place during 4-H Camp, they occurred within the context of the study. Context is a critical piece to naturalistic inquiry (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and involves a myriad of interconnecting relationships (Erlandson et al., 1993). The interviews were critical for exploring how the participants interpreted and attributed meaning to their lived experiences (Corbetta, 2003) that led them to become 4-H Camp teen leaders.

Following receipt of IRB approval, I field-tested the interview questions with three 4-H Camp teen leaders who were not participating in the study and with whom I did not have a close working relationship. The field testing took place through Zoom videoconferencing. This field testing served the purpose of making sure that the teens understood the questions. I could seek clarification from them on questions they found ambiguous, or that left them feeling uncertain about what was being asked (Rothgeb, 2011). They found one subpart of a question confusing,

and I was able to eliminate it altogether since each young person touched on it in other answers. The field testing also helped me gauge the length of time the interviews would take (Blake, 2015), which was approximately 30 minutes.

Interviews took place during the participants' respective camp weeks in an area with as few distractions as possible. The interviews ranged from 11 minutes, somewhat shorter than most, to 36 minutes and averaged 21 minutes in length. I recorded the interviews for later transcription using a primary device (Zoom) on my cell phone and a backup audio recording application (Voice Recorder) on my tablet. Recording the interviews allowed me to use active listening skills and to guide the conversation without distractions from copious note-taking (Corbetta, 2003). I was still able to jot down my impressions, the emotion behind statements, facial expressions, and other items of note, but I was not distracted by having to capture what the participants said, as that was captured verbatim on the recordings and resulting transcripts. Brinkman and Kvale (2018) recommend capturing these nuances of meaning that wouldn't be reflected in the transcript text. Interview questions, described below, are also found in Appendix F.

Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. As we get started, I'd like to ask a few demographic questions (questions used to describe you):

    a. What is your gender?

    b. What are your race and ethnicity? (If needed: Ethnicity refers to belonging to a population group or subgroup made up of people who share a common cultural background or descent. Examples might be Hispanic or Latinx, Middle Eastern, or Romani, among others.)

    c. Please describe any experience you have had as a camper, either in 4-H or other overnight camps, and the number of years you attended, if any.

    d. Please describe any experience you have had as a 4-H Camp Counselor in Training (CIT) or similar position at 4-H Camp or other overnight camps and the number of years you were in this training position, if any.

    e. How many years have you been a 4-H Camp teen leader?

2. Tell me how 4-H Camp is going for you this week.

3. What is your favorite thing about 4-H Camp?

4. How has this favorite thing changed over time from when you were a camper to now? SQ1, SQ3

5. Think back to your first year as a 4-H Camp teen leader. Why did you sign up to be a teen leader? CRQ

6. What experiences did you have as a camper or CIT that influenced your decision to be a teen leader? SQ1

    a. How did these things make you feel?

    b. How do you describe the camp community/ camp culture?

7. What experiences outside of camp (maybe at school, home, sports, or hanging out with friends) influenced your decision to be a 4-H Camp teen leader? SQ1

    a. How did these things make you feel?

    b. How do you describe the _____ community?

8. Describe your experiences as a 4-H Camp teen leader. SQ3

9. What do you think are the benefits of being a 4-H Camp teen leader? SQ2

    a. How do these benefits help you, personally?

10. This is your _____ year as a 4-H Camp teen leader. Why did you volunteer to come back? SQ3

11. Please describe your thoughts about volunteerism. Why volunteer? CRQ

    a. What other volunteer work are you involved in outside of 4-H, if any?

12. Thank you for your time. Is there anything else you think I should know about your experiences that led you to volunteer as a 4-H Camp teen leader? CRQ

The first question series served as an icebreaker to get the participant comfortable with the interview process (Erlandson et al., 1993) and established background information that helped guide the interview. The race, ethnicity, and gender questions bare upon the study only to show diversity within the participants rather than a homogenous group. The latter part of this question served to set the stage and get the teen thinking about the context of camp. Setting the stage is key to get at the desired information (Brinkman & Kvale, 2018). Roulston and Choi (2018) referred to this as learning about the participant's context in order to ask appropriate questions during the interview. The second through fourth questions were designed to initiate open conversation and to establish rapport with the participant by helping the participant get more comfortable with the process. Establishing rapport is important since the interview flow will, in part, depend on the level of trust and the relationship developed between the interviewer and interviewee (Corbetta, 2003). These questions also served to begin reflecting on camp experiences. Garst et al. (2016) noted that camp experiences were the most consistent feature pointing to positive outcomes in the camp environment; therefore, capturing the teen's perceptions surrounding their meaningful camp experiences is important. As every participant had been a 4-H camper before and some had participated in other overnight camps, I could ask the fourth question of all participants. I had been prepared to modify it as is appropriate in a

semi-structured interview where participant responses will direct the conversation (Brinkman &

Kvale, 2018). The fourth question helped me note a change in perceptions over time. One way

organized camping programs contribute to positive developmental outcomes in youth is by

scaffolding knowledge, skills, and abilities over time (Garst et al., 2011). This question indirectly

touched on SQ1 and SQ3.

Questions five through seven were designed to generate more detailed descriptions of the

lived experiences that led these teens to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. Question five

directly asked about motivation to become a 4-H Camp teen leader. Motivation may be either

intrinsic or extrinsic (Ryan & Deci, 2017). Research into the neurocognitive functions of

adolescents shows that the teenage years are often a period where changes in motivation occur

(Van Duijvenvoorde et al., 2016). Therefore, this question sought to answer the central question.

Questions six and seven again focused on the teens' lived experiences and how these experiences

influenced them to become 4-H Camp teen leaders. Nolen et al. (2015) suggested the importance

of the social and learning contexts that support motivation and subsequent engagement. Both

RDST, with a focus on individual growth and development (Lerner, Johnson, et al., 2015), and

SDT, which points to environmental influences on motivation (Gagné & Deci, 2014), support

this idea. Ryan and Deci (2002) also noted that perceived competence could enhance intrinsic

motivation. The follow-up questions to questions six and seven yielded responses that connect to

SQ1 related to positive youth development. The importance of engagement, developing

supportive relationships, exploring independence, and providing opportunities for skill-building

are critical to PYD (Bowers et al., 2015; Lerner, 2004; Moore, 2017), and responses to these

questions frequently linked experiences to these factors and others reflective of PYD.

The eighth question specifically related to SQ2, focusing on the teens' perceived benefits

of being a 4-H Camp teen leader. These benefits, whether internal or tangible, play a role in both intrinsic motivation as they relate to perceptions of autonomy and feelings of competence and extrinsic motivation as they relate to physical rewards or conceptual ones (Ryan & Deci, 2017), such as experience for a job application. Additionally, Van Duijvenvoorde et al. (2016) indicated that youth experience increased reward sensitivity during their teenage years due to neurocognitive changes.

Questions nine and ten were interconnected and focused on SQ3 while also informing SQ1. They concentrated on experiences the teens had that motivated them to return as 4-H Camp teen leaders after their initial year volunteering in that role. The ninth question simply asked the teens to describe their experiences as 4-H Camp teen leaders. Research shows that teenagers in leadership roles at camp often gain positive benefits from their camp experiences, just as the campers do (Bird & Subramaniam, 2018; Garst et al., 2011). These experiences and the developmental relationships surrounding them impact the young person's growth (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015) and influence motivation when they intersect with an individual's need for competence, autonomy, and relatedness (Deci & Ryan, 2000). The tenth question focused on why the teens return to volunteer roles. Discovering the "why" linked Deci & Ryan's (2000) previously mentioned connection to motivation as well as to the Five Cs of PYD (Lerner, 2004), which connects life skill development to a desire to contribute to self, family, community, and society.

Volunteerism was the topic of the eleventh question, which explored how youth view the concept. Adolescence is when, as they mature, youth become more aware of the needs of others while also engaging more with broader communities and contexts (Fuligni, 2019). Parent and educational influences often shape youth ideas about volunteering (Salem Press, 2014; Wilson,

2000). Youth are also influenced by individual development and connection to the community

(Malin et al., 2015). Since being a 4-H Camp teen leader is a volunteer role, albeit one that

demands a large time commitment coupled with immense responsibility understanding the teen's

views on volunteerism connects to the central question regarding their experiences that led them

to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. The final question allowed participants to guide the close

of the interview (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), ensuring they could include any other information they

saw as relevant to the conversation.

The 4-H Camping specialist, other 4-H Agents, and 4-H Camp staff reviewed the

questions for clarity and suitability. After receiving IRB approval, I field-tested the interview

questions with a group of 4-H teens who were not participating in the research study and with

whom I did not have a close working relationship. Erlandson et al. (1993) emphasized the

importance of careful word choice in the interview questions. They noted that the researcher

must word the questions so as to elicit responses that will connect to the research questions

(Erlandson et al., 1993). Patton (2002) also pointed to word choice as critical to the quality of the

interview, stating that the word choice and phrasing used must be understood and resonate with

the participants. Field testing the questions with a group of 4-H Camp teen leaders who were not

participating in the research study helped fine-tune the questions so that the wording was readily

understood.

Individual Interview Data Analysis Plan (Data Analysis Plan #1)

Data analysis took place throughout the data collection process and after its conclusion. I

engaged in epoché while analyzing the data. Epoché occurs when the researcher sets aside

personal assumptions and biases to study the topic with a fresh perspective, being open to

whatever may be discovered (Moustakas, 1994). I gave equal value to all parts of the experience,

and through concentrated attention, I was able to derive a better understanding of the

phenomenon and its meaning (Moustakas, 1994). I began the data analysis of interviews even

while the process was ongoing. To maintain confidentiality, I kept the pseudonyms selected by

research participants during the data analysis phase. I used a free data transcription service

available to me at work using the Virginia Tech Caltura platform. The transcription service

provided me with a rough transcription, but I still had to review and clean the transcription,

which took meticulous examination. Following this cleaning, I sent a copy of the transcript to the

participant as a member check so that the participant could comment on the accuracy of intent in

what was captured in the interview if they desired. As I read through the transcriptions, I made

memos about thoughts and ideas that emerged during the initial reading (Saldaña, 2016).

Following Moustakas' (1994) process for data analysis, I engaged in phenomenological

reduction and horizonalization of data. Phenomenological reduction took place as I considered

and reflected upon the experience again and again, gaining new perspectives and recognizing

horizons or layers of meaning (Moustakas, 1994). Following that, I initiated the horizonalization

process of identifying all relevant statements and clustering them into themes to give a rich

description of the phenomenon (Moustakas, 1994). During this process, I treated each statement

as having equal worth to help reduce researcher bias (Leech & Onwuegbuzie, 2008). I identified

structural and textural descriptions for each participant (Moustakas, 1994) using their own words

or phrases as the in vivo coding, which captures participant voice (Saldaña, 2016). Structural

descriptions detail the experience, while textural descriptions reflect how the participant

experienced it and their feelings associated with it (Moustakas, 1994). In vivo coding uses as

codes the actual words or phrases used by the participants and is suitable for the initial level of

coding (Saldaña, 2016). Since the researcher is the most important tool (Erlandson et al., 1993), I

coded the data by hand. Saldaña (2016) recommends a second level of coding, if needed, to further organize the themes. Therefore, my next step was to use focused coding to do just that. Focused coding involves combing through the codes and grouping them into themes (Saldaña, 2016). This careful perusal enabled me to put data into categories according to the most significant or frequently occurring themes and is an appropriate second step following in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2016). After completing this process for each participant, I created composite themes and descriptions for the group as a whole (Moustakas, 1994).

Observations (Data Collection Approach #2)

I observed each of the 16 research participants in their roles as teen leaders at 4-H Camp following the interviews. Field observations are used to understand the context, nuances of meaning, verify or question information provided in an interview, and learn information not addressed in the interview (Patton, 2002). These observations did not occur in a continuous block of time, but rather, they occurred throughout the day and into the evening of the interviews so that I could observe the teens in various duties and free time. I observed each participant for at least three hours in duties including classes, meals, line-ups, group meetings, recreation, evening programs, and during free time. The timing of the observations was fluid as the participants moved between activities. I was a non-participant observer – watching but not engaging in activities (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Lashley, 2017). By not actively participating in the camp activities, I could devote more time to noticing the nuances, including behavior and nonverbal communication (Lashley, 2017). Even though I was not an active participant, the leadership team members knew that a 4-H Agent from another county was there observing camp. Because I "belong" at camp, the likelihood of campers, teens, and others altering their behavior because of an "outsider" being nearby (Lashley, 2017; Patton, 2002) was significantly reduced. The

protocol for the observations is found in Appendix G. It involved capturing information about

the context and teen participants' behaviors and interactions within that context following broad

topics recommended by Corbetta (2003) and Patton (2002):

- physical setting - describing the physical camp environment,

- social setting - how groups – teens, campers, adults, staff – are divided and interact
  with each other

- formal interactions - interactions between the teens and other groups, including their
  peer group, that are expected because of the roles they hold

- informal interactions - nuances in how the teen participants interact with others

- observing what does not happen – noticing something that might be expected to occur
  but doesn't

While conducting observations, I took detailed field notes (Corbetta, 2003) describing

what I saw and heard (descriptive notes) and also included notes on my interpretations of what I

observed (reflective notes). The descriptive notes were detailed rather than merely a summary

(Erlandson et al., 1993). The reflective notes included my reactions to, feelings about, and the

significance I attributed to what I observed (Patton, 2002).

One of the things I observed was how the teens interacted with campers, their peers, the

camp staff, and the other adults with whom they worked. I paid particular attention to levels of

respect or lack thereof, including mutual respect, among the groups as evidenced by their actions

and words. Respect for others is part of a pro-social orientation. Other factors indicative of a pro-

social orientation which I observed were responsibility and caring (Arnold & Gagnon, 2019).

The concept of pro-social orientation is connected to PYD, which directly relates to SQ1.

Another area of observation related to SQ1 and SQ3 involved watching how the teens and adults

worked together in partnership. Observing those verbal and non-verbal interactions shed light on

the supportive relationships and level of engagement (Weybright et al., 2017). Sub-question

three focused on the experiences the teens have that motivate them to continue in their leadership

roles. Therefore, I recorded my observations of the teens in action while performing their duties

and during their free time. One purpose of the observations was to connect what I saw and heard

with what the participants shared during the interviews (Patton, 2002). I captured corroborating

evidence for some of what the teens shared related to SQ2 about their perceived benefits of being

a 4-H Camp teen leader. For instance, many spoke about positively influencing campers, and I

documented actions and words that supported those statements. Watching and listening to the

teens at 4-H Camp yielded a wealth of information related to the CRQ.

Observation Data Analysis Plan *(Data Analysis Plan #2)*

As with the interviews, analysis of observation data began even as observations at other

sites continued during the summer of 2022. The research participants' pseudonyms chosen during

the interviews were used on the observation sheets and carried over during data analysis. Like

the interview process, I began with a careful read-through of each sheet of observation notes and

memoed my initial reactions, thoughts, and ideas (Saldaña, 2016). During this process, I again

engaged in epoché. Since the words on the observation sheets were my own and not those of the

participants, the first level of coding was descriptive open coding. After the open coding, I

engaged in a thematic analysis to link the open codes to emerging themes (Durdella, 2019) for

each individual observation. Following that, I sought linkages among all 16 observations. I

discerned that there were no divergent themes. Since the data analysis from the interviews and

observations combined partially informed the focus group questioning, I looked for

commonalities within the two data sets. I used that information to further develop the focus

group questions.

Focus Groups (Data Collection Approach #3)

Focus groups provide an additional layer of interview data but do not replace the detailed individual interview (Fontana & Frey, 1994). As the facilitator, I used open-ended questions and invited participation from all members so that one or two participants did not have the dominant voice (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Krueger & Casey, 2015; Morgan, 2019; Patton, 2002). I kept the responses focused on the question at hand (Morgan, 2012; Patton, 2002) but simultaneously allowed participants to elaborate on matters they deemed important (Morgan, 2012) using a semi-structured approach.

Focus groups highlight the variety of perspectives about the phenomenon while participants interact with each other (Morgan & Hoffman, 2018; Stewart, 2018). This social setting can help spur participants to build off of or react to what others have said (Patton, 2002). Morgan and Hoffman (2018) refer to this technique as sharing and comparing, something that results from the dynamics of the focus group interview. Six previously interviewed and observed participants volunteered to be focus group participants. Ultimately, only five of them participated. The group members were linked by the shared experience of being a 4-H Camp teen leader, but they also had different perspectives of camping in different camping clusters and at different Virginia 4-H Educational Centers. This homogeneity of experience is important for understanding each other's perspectives and reacting to them (Morgan, 2012). The focus group conversations were recorded through the videoconference platform (Zoom) and a secondary audio device (Voice Recorder app) as a backup.

As each participant entered the waiting room for the focus group on the Zoom videoconference platform, I helped them change their real names to their pseudonyms which

were displayed and used upon entry into the focus group and during the discussion. Pseudonyms helped with confidentiality, but because of the group setting, it did not guarantee it (Krueger & Casey, 2015; Morgan, 2019). Following a brief introduction I gave about the focus group process, participants introduced themselves using their pseudonyms and stated the 4-H Center where they camped. Morgan (2019) suggested allowing participants to introduce themselves at the outset of the focus group to understand who is part of the discussion and to get started with a simple piece of information related to the topic. Krueger and Casey (2015) noted that the introduction should avoid highlighting differences between participants. They specifically mentioned that when working with teenagers, researchers should avoid status-type labels such as age or grade (Krueger & Casey, 2015). For this reason, during the introductory phase, I refrained from asking youth to include information about how many years they have served as a teen leader at 4-H Camp.

The focus group questions arose from topics I needed to explore further after conducting the individual interviews and making field observations. These topics included youth-adult partnerships, feelings connected to what they do at camp and how it has impacted them, and their commitment to being a 4-H Camp teen leader. Using the facilitator guide helped keep the questions focused on the topic and helped me guide the flow of conversation (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Morgan, 2012). The focus group interview protocol, like the individual interview protocol, was semi-structured (Fontana & Frey, 1994; Roulston & Choi, 2018). Morgan and Hoffman (2018) suggested a funnel approach to focus group questioning, which I employed. This technique involves establishing rapport and engaging participants by starting the questioning with broader questions and then narrowing the focus to more specific topics of interest as participants become more comfortable with the process (Morgan & Hoffman, 2018; Roulston &

Choi, 2018). The questions in the focus group facilitator guide were informed by analysis of data

from the interviews and observations and are found in Appendix H. Some questions focused on

experiences as part of PYD, which is the basis of the 4-H context (Arnold & Silliman, 2017;

White et al., 2018). Other lines of questioning helped me better understand the data collected by

the other research methods (Krueger & Casey, 2015). Emerging themes from the interviews and

observations informed the focus group guide. Patton (2002) and Stewart (2018) recommend a

maximum of 12 major questions for focus groups, and Morgan (2019) indicated a need also to be

mindful of the time allotted for the focus group when planning questions. Accordingly, I limited

the protocol to nine major questions with a couple of follow-up questions as needed.

The focus groups took place in August 2022 via the Zoom videoconference platform. The

videoconference option was best due to the wide geographical area within the state. By not

holding it in person, the participants did not have to travel long distances for a meeting that

lasted for approximately 60 minutes. The built-in Zoom recording option was the primary

recording source, with a backup audio recording application (Voice Recorder) on my tablet. I

selected the Zoom platform because it is the videoconference platform used in Virginia 4-H.

Many 4-H youth became familiar with it when 4-H incorporated virtual program offerings during

the COVID-19 pandemic. Kruger and Casey (2015) recommend that when conducting focus

groups using technology, the researcher use a platform with which the participants are familiar.

Since I had the verbatim transcripts of the focus groups to refer to later, I focused my notetaking

on attitudes, emotions, facial expressions, head nods, and my impressions. I also noted items that

I want to refer back to as I probed deeper into a particular topic or response (Kruger & Casey,

2015).

Just like with the interviews, I field-tested the focus group questions as recommended by

Krueger (1998). Following another recommendation by Krueger (1998), fellow 4-H Extension

Agents reviewed the questions for clarity and flow before the field testing. Field testing involved

the same three 4-H Camp teen leaders who participated in field testing the interview questions

earlier in the summer. These youth were not involved as research participants and were not youth

with whom I regularly work. The purpose of the field testing was to determine how the questions

sounded when asked orally, how the teens understood and interpreted the questions as worded,

and to observe signs of confusion or hesitation on the part of the teens, which could indicate

unclear questions (Krueger & Casey, 2015). As part of this field test, I also asked the teens

involved for feedback on the question wording and flow. Lastly, as recommended by Krueger

(1998), I asked them if they had any advice for me as I prepared for and moderated the actual

research focus groups. They had me swap out one vocabulary word, changing aspects to parts.

Other than that, the questions proved sound as originally written.

Focus Group Questions

1. What do you enjoy about being a teen leader at 4-H Camp? CRQ

2. What isn't as enjoyable about the experience? CRQ

3. You've told me some good points and some less enjoyable points about being a teen

    leader. With the ups and downs, what is it that makes you want to sign up to be a 4-H

    Camp teen leader? CRQ

    a. Please share with me a specific experience that led you to want to be a 4-H

        Camp teen leader.

    b. What parts of that experience stand out to you the most?

4. Tell me about the working relationships you have with the adult leaders and

    Extension Agents at camp. SQ1

      a.   Do you feel it is a true partnership where you are treated as equal partners?

      b.   What about your working relationships with the summer camp staff?

5. How do you feel about the impact you make at 4-H Camp? SQ1, SQ2, SQ3

6. What did you have to give up in order to be a 4-H Camp teen leader? SQ2

      a.   What kind of fee was there for you to come to camp as a teen leader?

      b.   What makes giving this up worth it?

7. How were you invited to become a 4-H Camp teen leader? CRQ, SQ1

8. How has 4-H Camp impacted you? CRQ, SQ1, SQ2, SQ3

9. What else would you like for me to know about your experiences that motivate you to volunteer as a 4-H Camp teen leader? CRQ

When inserting additional questions that arose during the interview and observation data analysis, I added them where the topical flow made the most sense (Morgan, 2019). I only added those that were necessary to ensure the focus group time frame would not exceed 90 minutes (Kruger & Casey, 2015; Morgan, 2019). Kruger and Casey (2015) described the typical time frame for an adult focus group as two hours but stressed that when working with youth, the time should be shortened to the appropriate attention span for the age group. Morgan (2019) recommended no more than 90 minutes.

The first two questions were broad. They served to get the discussion going and help participants feel more comfortable talking with each other (Morgan, 2019). They were both simple questions, but ones where each participant had a ready answer and hopefully was also interested in how others answered the questions (Morgan, 2019). The sequence of these first two questions followed advice from Kruger and Casey (2015) about asking positive questions before negative ones. The answers generated for the first focus group question helped inform not only

the central question but also each of the sub-questions. They also served the purpose of opening

up the dialogue among participants (Morgan, 2019). The answers to both the first and second

focus group questions provided information regarding the context of the camp experience from

the teen leader perspective and funneled into question number three about teen motivation to

volunteer as a 4-H Camp teen leader. The camp context is vital from a PYD perspective as part

of RDST (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015).

The third question informed the central question of this study. It specifically focused on

motivation, whether it be intrinsic or extrinsic (Ryan & Deci, 2017), to be a 4-H Camp teen

leader. The two follow-up questions asked for aspects about one specific experience that

contributed to this desire and informed the central question while, in some cases, touching on the

three sub-questions. This question and its sub-questions were designed to generate more detailed

descriptions about the lived experiences that led these teens to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen

leaders.

Question four specifically related to SQ1 about PYD experiences and developmental

relationships. Within RDST, individual growth and development are influenced by the

surrounding developmental context, while simultaneously, the developmental context is partially

shaped by the individual's interaction within it (Overton, 2015). A part of the context of PYD

programs is that of youth-adult partnerships where youth are given equal voice and are supported

in roles that allow them to make a difference in their communities (Price & Been, 2018). From

the standpoint of this study, within the 4-H Camp community, the relationship between teen

leaders and their adult counterparts may be influential.

Question five related to all three sub-questions and also informed the central question.

The attitude youth have about their contribution and the outcomes that arise from it may

influence their perceived competence which Ryan and Deci (2002) argued is a factor in intrinsic motivation along with independence and a connection to others.

Question six and its follow-up questions provided insight into the motivation level the teens participating in this study had to volunteer as 4-H Camp leaders and again referenced their motivation for doing so. This line of questioning addressed SQ2.

The seventh question connected to SQ1 and PYD. Positive youth development involves positive developmental relationships, a scaffolding experience with increased knowledge and skill building, and increased youth agency (Cantor et al., 2021; Eccles & Gootman, 2002; Garst et al., 2011; Lerner et al., 2021; Weybright et al., 2017) and may also be a factor in this initial recruitment. Accordingly, how the teens were first approached, or if they were approached by someone or sought out the experience themselves, provided insight into this aspect of PYD and how it connects to the CRQ.

Question eight informed the CRQ while also touching on each of the three sub questions. It was appropriate since all 16 participants indicated that they had previously been 4-H campers, CITs, and now teen leaders, showing a progression of experiences over time. In discovering the teens' thoughts on how being a part of 4-H Camp has impacted them, their responses illuminated their perceptions about their 4-H Camp experiences. It allowed them to describe the big picture regarding experiences specific to the camping environment that motivated them to be 4-H Camp teen leaders. How the youth ultimately embraced or withdrew from these experiences is also a factor in PYD (Wilson & Sibthorp, 2017).

Question nine was the final question of the focus group session. It invited the participants to wrap up the discussion while also allowing them to highlight pieces of information they felt were important to the topic at hand but may not have been adequately covered (Morgan, 2019).

Focus Group Data Analysis Plan (Data Analysis Plan #3)

The focus group discussions took place on the Zoom videoconference platform with a built-in transcription capability. There was a backup audio recording plan in place (Voice Recorder app on my tablet), which could be uploaded to the same Caltura platform as with the interview data for the rough transcription. I reviewed the audio to clean the transcriptions of wording that the computer program captured incorrectly. Following this cleaning, I sent the transcripts to focus group participants as member checks so that they could provide comments or corrections if desired. I also reviewed the captured video and made memos of facial expressions and other body language used by the participants, noting the context of the discussion. I used the pseudonyms the participants chose during the interviews for the focus group transcriptions. As with the interview analysis, I began by reading the transcripts and making memos of my initial thoughts and ideas (Saldaña, 2016). I then employed phenomenological reduction (Moustakas, 1994) to arrive at the participant words and phrases to be used as the first level of in vivo coding (Saldaña, 2016). Then I used focused coding to group the in vivo codes into themes (Saldaña, 2016).

Data Synthesis

I followed the analytical steps through the first level of coding for the interviews and then the observations, including an analysis of the memos I made. These preliminary analyses informed additional questions for the focus group protocol. After I analyzed the data from the three methods of data collection independently, I used a third level of analysis with another layer of focused coding to connect and group the themes further. I engaged in what Moustakas (1994) referred to as imaginative variation, where I considered various possibilities of meaning that could be extrapolated from the resulting themes. I determined the findings' significance and

meaning (Patton, 2002). The final step was to compile a written report following steps outlined by Moustakas (1994).

1. Summarize the study (Moustakas, 1994). I summarized the research process, including the thematic analysis. I described the bracketing process of epoché to separate my preexisting biases and assumptions from the data analysis (Moustakas, 1994). I discussed how I obtained and analyzed data, paying attention to its horizonalization and coding. Then, I described the findings with detailed examples, including thick descriptions and quotes from participants (Patton, 2002).

2. Connect the study findings to those included in the literature review, noting similarities and differences (Moustakas, 1994). The thick descriptions tell part of the story, with another significant part coming from the researcher's interpretation of them (Patton, 2002). Therefore, I stated my conclusions, using the data to support them (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994), and compared the findings to what is already known, citing where the findings share commonalities with and diverge from the literature. I also communicated the trustworthiness of the data used to determine the findings (Patton, 2002). When reporting findings, I kept the purpose behind the research in mind (Patton, 2002). I discussed the implications of the findings pertaining to 4-H professionals, other youth development professionals, teens, families, and communities of which the teens are a part. I also related the findings to the field of positive youth development and described them within the dual lenses of RDST and SDT.

3. Connect the study to opportunities for further research (Moustakas, 1994). All research has limitations, and I note those as well as ideas for future study (Moustakas, 1994) in chapter five. I also provided suggestions on how my research could be extended.

4. Connect the research to personal outcomes (Moustakas, 1994). Having stated my connection to the study topic earlier in the researcher positionality section, I connected the findings back to their usefulness to me personally.

5. Connect the research to professional outcomes (Moustakas, 1994). My personal outcomes overlap with my professional outcomes. I enumerated how these research findings may help other 4-H professionals and camping professionals work with youth and recruit 4-H Camp teen leaders.

6. Connect the research to societal outcomes (Moustakas, 1994). Since teen leader outcomes extend beyond camp to the other communities of which the teens are a part (Ferrari & Arnett, 2011; Leff et al., 2015), I linked the significance of the study findings to the broader social implications.

7. Give closing comments (Moustakas, 1994). I closed chapter five with a brief summary and concluding statements.

The written report reflected the purpose behind this study of describing lived experiences of teenagers that motivate them to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia.

<div align="center">**Trustworthiness**</div>

I considered trustworthiness in the design of this study to show quality and diligence in the research by following criteria for credibility, dependability, confirmability, and transferability as outlined by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Erlandson et al. (1993). A description of each of these criteria in the present study follows as well as a description of the ethical considerations I employed. I also engaged in epoché to focus on what the data revealed, removing existing biases and assumptions to the extent possible (Moustakas, 1994).

Credibility

Credibility refers to the internal validity of the findings, specifically the accuracy in describing the phenomenon under study (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I established credibility by first carefully collecting and interpreting data to accurately represent the phenomenon under investigation (Erlandson et al., 1993). I used member checks and triangulation to establish credibility.

Member Checks

Member checks involve verifying the data collected and the researcher's interpretation of that data with the research participants themselves (Erlandson et al., 1993). I conducted member checks during data collection and after analyzing data (Lincoln & Guba, 1985; Miles et al., 2020). Participants were able to review the transcripts for accuracy for their individual and focus group interviews within a month of them taking place. Additional member checks took place in late September after data analysis so that participants could comment on and contribute to the findings (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Data Triangulation

Data triangulation involves gathering and comparing data using multiple methods or sources to generate a thick description of the phenomenon under study (Denzin & Lincoln, 1994; Erlandson et al., 1993) and to seek a convergence of findings (Flick, 2018). I followed a triangulation method described by Flick (2018) in which the same participants are involved in three data collection methods. The interview yielded data about the teens' experiences gathered in a conversational setting, observations yielded data in the actual locale where participants were actively engaged, and focus groups produced data where participants built upon each other's responses to generate a web of information. I first analyzed the data individually by method and

then collectively across methods to discover patterns within the themes (Flick, 2018).

Transferability

Since qualitative data is not generalizable, transferability connects the findings to other conditions in similar contexts (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I used purposive sampling, where participants were selected because of their experience with the phenomenon under study (Carpenter, 2017). In this study, the research participants were all typical 4-H Camp teen leaders in at least their second year of 4-H Camp teen leadership. I improved transferability by collecting and reporting thick descriptions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985), but I cannot guarantee it. Thick descriptions are detailed and precise so that the reader can almost imagine themselves there (Erlandson et al., 1993). By providing these thick descriptions, the findings from this study may be applied to 4-H Camp teen leadership in other states or other camp leadership contexts.

Dependability

Dependability relates to consistency or stability in the research such that it can be replicated (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). I used a dependability audit trail of written notes, memos, transcriptions, and other pertinent information to document the research process (Erlandson et al., 1993). I took these notes and memos throughout the interview, observation, and focus group data collection and kept writing notes and memos during the analysis stage. Dependability is also addressed through the triangulation process described previously in terms of the overlap of similar results (Lincoln & Guba, 1985) and through persistent observation, where I actively sought out data and determined relevance (Erlandson et al., 1993). Lastly, my dissertation committee and the Liberty University Qualitative Research Director conducted an inquiry audit of my research process and findings.

Confirmability

Confirmability determines how objective the researcher is in conducting the study and analyzing the data; it verifies the process as being driven by data from the participants and not from researcher bias (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The confirmability audit trail focuses on documentation that supports how data was interpreted to arrive at the findings (Erlandson et al., 1993). These notes and memos reflect my budding ideas on the meaning of the data, connections made linking data collected (Huberman & Miles, 1994), and other thoughts I deemed noteworthy (Patton, 2002). Confirmability is also addressed through reflexivity, where I was aware of and documented my philosophical assumptions, biases, and preconceptions about the phenomenon (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This bracketing of my biases and assumptions through epoché (Moustakas, 1994) contributed to confirmability. As suggested by Lincoln and Guba (1985) and Erlandson et al. (1993), I practiced reflexivity through notes in a reflexivity journal. My dissertation committee and the Liberty University Qualitative Research Director checked records during the inquiry audit to determine confirmability. These records included the raw data, notes, and summaries related to data reduction and the resulting themes, findings, and conclusions, notes that I made along the way about the process and my reflective notes, and also materials and notes from field testing the interview and focus group questions (Lincoln & Guba, 1985).

Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations are critical when working with human subjects (Erlandson et al., 1993). I received Institutional Review Board (IRB) approval before collecting data. Since most of the research participants were minors, I obtained written informed consent from their parents and written assent from the participants. For those youth ages 18 or 19, I obtained written consent. I also orally verified with each participant before interviews, observations, and focus

group participation that they were willing to participate in the study. I reminded them that they could end their participation in the study at any time without penalty. Keeping to the study's intent, I was candid with the participants and approving bodies about the research purpose and how findings would be communicated (Erlandson et al., 1993).

As part of my professional role within the 4-H program, I undergo a background check each year before the camping season. This background check also served as an added layer of protection for the youth I came into contact with during this study. To protect the anonymity of the participants, I maintained both privacy and confidentiality (Byrne, 2017) by using pseudonyms for participants and keeping electronic files on a password-protected computer and paper documents in a locked file drawer. This data will be destroyed three years after dissertation publication. I cannot, however, guarantee confidentiality regarding what was said in the focus groups (Krueger & Casey, 2015; Morgan, 2019). It is known that the research occurred at Virginia's 4-H Educational Centers. However, the data was not linked to the specific 4-H Center where it was collected.

I secured written permission to conduct research with Virginia 4-H youth from the Virginia State 4-H Program Leader and secured site approvals from the individual 4-H Centers and permission from the Extension Agents camping the weeks of the interviews and observations.

While there were no perceived risks or benefits to the research participants themselves, this research may lead to a closer examination of experiences that promote future camp leadership, may help in future 4-H Camp teen leader recruitment, and may help to enhance teen leader experiences through improved 4-H programming and teen-adult partnerships.

Summary

To address the problem of why young people volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia, the current study focused on a purposive sample of these teens to better understand their lived experiences that motivate them to be 4-H Camp teen leaders. This phenomenological study involved data triangulation between interviews, observations, and focus groups. Data analysis followed strategies outlined by Moustakas (1994) in making meaning through horizonalization. I coded data by hand, using first in vivo coding to retain the language used by participants followed by focused coding (Saldaña, 2016). Throughout the study, I paid attention to trustworthiness, addressing issues of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). As part of this emphasis on trustworthiness, I engaged in epoché (Moustakas, 1994) to bracket my biases and focus on discovering information with a fresh perspective. A consideration of ethics in research was also woven throughout the study. IRB approval was a precursor to field testing interview and focus group questions and data collection. Additionally, I collected assent and consent forms from the participants and their parents when the participants were minors, and consent forms from the 18 and 19-year-old participants, ensuring that they understood what participation in the study entailed. Before engaging the participants in interviews, observations, and focus groups, I again verbally confirmed the participant's willingness to be part of the study. Finally, all data has been kept confidential. I used pseudonyms during focus groups, on transcriptions, on observation notes, and throughout all data analysis and reporting. Electronic data is stored on a password-protected computer with physical paperwork kept in a locked file drawer.

CHAPTER FOUR: FINDINGS

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to describe the lived experiences that motivate teenagers to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. Chapter one covered background information. Chapter two highlighted existing literature on the subject and identified the gaps in that literature, while chapter three detailed the methods involved in this research. The current chapter, chapter four, presents the findings resulting from careful data analysis. This chapter includes a description of the participants, the results derived from the data with a description of each theme and subtheme, outlier data, research question responses, and general conclusions.

Participants

Sixteen youth took part in this qualitative study (Table 1). The participants included nine females, six males, one of whom mentioned that he used he/they pronouns, and one nonbinary youth. The racial breakdown included three African American or Black youth, nine Caucasian or White youth, and two multicultural youth. Of the multicultural youth, one indicated a combination of Asian and White, and the other indicated Black and Columbian. Two youth were of Hispanic ethnicity. No other youth identified with a particular ethnic group.

Table 1

4-H Camp Teen Leader Research Participants

Participant Pseudonym	Years as a Teen Leader	Years as a Counselor-in-Training	Years as a Camper	Gender	Race	Ethnicity (if identified)	Focus Group
Aaron	2	1	8	Male; uses He/They pronouns	Multicultural (Asian/White)		Yes
Braedyn	2	1	5	Nonbinary	White		
Brooke	4	1	3	Female	White		
Catherine	3	1	10	Female	White		
Dream	4	1	1	Female	Black		Yes
Jay	4	1	4	Male	Black		
Kane	2	1	3	Male	White	Hispanic	Yes
Kay	3	1	3	Female	White		
Liana	3	1	5	Female	White		
Maggie	3	1	4	Female	White		Yes
Mark	4	1	4	Male	White		Yes
Mary	3	1	5	Female	White		
Paul	2	1	5	Male	Black		
Racquet	2	1	3	Female	Multicultural (Black/Columbian)	Hispanic	
Susan	3	1	5	Female	White		
Zed	3	1	3	Male	White		

Although not fully representative, the research sample approximated the demographics of Virginia 4-H Camp teen leaders (Table 2). 4-H Camp did not take place in 2020 and occurred at 50% capacity in 2021, which is why those numbers are not included for comparison purposes.

Table 2

Demographic Representation of Sample Compared to Typical 4-H Camp Teen Leaders

	Research participants	Virginia 4-H Camp teen leaders in 2019	Virginia 4-H Camp teen leaders in 2022
Race			
African American/ Black	19%	15%	11%
Caucasian/White	69%	77%	83%
Multiracial/Other	13%	8%	14%
Gender			
Female	56%	58%	52%
Male	38%	41.5%	42%
Other	6%	00.5%	2%
Prefer not to say			4%
Ethnicity			
Hispanic	13%	6% Hispanic or Latino; 5% unreported	3% Hispanic or Latino; 7% unreported

Note: 4-H Camp statewide teen leader demographic information was provided through personal communication with S. Fisher on September 11, 2021, and September 20, 2022.

Aaron

Aaron identified as a male teen leader using he/they pronouns. He described his race as multicultural, blending Asian and White parents. He was in his second year as a teen leader, with one year as a counselor-in-training (CIT) and eight years as a 4-H camper. When youth provide a number of years greater than five as a 4-H Camper, it means that they began their journey in 4-H Cloverbud Camp, which is designed for youth ages 5-8 and is a weekend event for younger youth. Aaron did not participate in any other overnight camping programs. He missed a year of teen leadership in 2020 with the COVID shutdown and was not involved in virtual camp leadership. Aaron actively volunteers with community events with his swim team and also

mentioned that he gave up competing in a big swim meet every year in order to attend 4-H Camp. Aaron was a focus group participant in addition to his interview and observation.

Braedyn

Braedyn identified as a nonbinary, White youth. They were in their second year as a 4-H Camp teen leader, having been a CIT for one year and a camper for five years of Junior 4-H Camp. Braedyn did not participate in any other overnight camps. They were involved in 4-H year-round and volunteered in several community service efforts through that program.

Brooke

Brooke is a White female. She was in her fourth year as a 4-H Camp teen leader. She was a CIT for one year and a 4-H camper for three years before that. Her four years of teen leadership included creating videos and doing other activities for her county's virtual 4-H Camp in 2020. She did not participate in other overnight camps but mentioned being part of 4-H day camps in both camper and teen leader roles. She volunteers outside of camp by participating in a regular food distribution program in her locality. Brooke was looking forward to starting college in the fall of 2022.

Catherine

Catherine is a White female. She mentioned that because of where her birthday fell, she was only in her third year of teen leadership, but that had enabled her to still spend her one year as a CIT and enjoy four years of Cloverbud 4-H Camp and six years of Junior 4-H Camp as a camper. These were the only organized residential camping programs of which she had been a part. Catherine was the only teen participant who did not actively volunteer outside of 4-H Camp. She mentioned having intentions to volunteer with the local SPCA in the future. Catherine planned to attend community college in the fall of 2022.

Dream

Dream is a Black female. She was in her fourth year as a 4-H Camp teen leader but mentioned that it was the sixth week-long camping experience she had been part of in the teen leader role, including a virtual camping experience during COVID. She also spent one year as a CIT and had the shortest stint as a 4-H Camper, having attended for only one year. Dream commented that she was sad that she had discovered 4-H Camp so late because she would have loved to know about it earlier. Dream participated in another weekend camp as a leader. This camp was conducted by a group at her school. She mentioned that she relied on her 4-H Camp training during that program as it was more comprehensive than the brief training she received for the weekend camp. Dream was also a focus group participant. In addition to volunteering at 4-H Camp, she is an active volunteer in several ways, including as a peer tutor, at the art museum and art camp and through service activities in a special program she is involved with at school.

Jay

Jay is a Black male. He was beginning his fourth year of teen leadership, having been a CIT for one year and a camper for four years before that. He had not attended any other overnight camps. In addition to volunteering at 4-H Camp, Jay is a very active volunteer EMT with lifesaving crews in two localities. Jay was excited to begin college in the fall of 2022.

Kane

Kane is a White male of Hispanic ethnicity. He was beginning his second year as a teen leader, having also been a CIT for one year and a camper for three. Kane is active in boy scouts and has attended boy scout camp for six or seven years. He could not remember the exact number. Kane contributed many volunteer hours to service activities, of which he was a part

through the scouting program. He also was a focus group participant.

Kay

Kay is a White female in her third year of teen leadership, skipping 2020 when there was no 4-H Camp. She spent one year as a CIT and three years as a camper at 4-H Camp. As a teenager, she was also a camper at another camp geared toward the older age group. Kay is a volunteer trainer with a recreational athletic league and has volunteered through school clubs. Kay was looking forward to starting college in the fall of 2022 and mentioned that she was considering applying for a summer 4-H Camp staff job next year.

Liana

Liana is a White female. The only overnight camp she has attended has been 4-H Camp. Liana was beginning her third year of 4-H Camp teen leadership and had been a CIT for one year and a 4-H Camper for five years. She skipped a year of teen leader eligibility during the COVID shutdown when camp was not held. Liana also volunteers with her church. Liana was looking toward college in the fall of 2022.

Maggie

Maggie is a White female. She was beginning her third year as a teen leader at 4-H Camp. She, too, skipped the COVID year in 2020 when there was no camp. Maggie was a CIT for one year and a 4-H Camper for three. 4-H Camp is the only overnight camp she has experienced. In addition to volunteering at 4-H Camp, Maggie volunteers with her church VBS and volunteer activities with her youth group. She also helps at special events at the elementary school, such as festivals, field days, and other events where they need help. Maggie, too, was looking forward to college in the fall of 2022. She was also a focus group participant.

Mark

Mark is a White male. He has been a 4-H Camp teen leader for four years, a CIT for one, and a 4-H Camper for four. One of his years as a teen leader included doing virtual projects to be used during virtual 4-H Camp in 2020 when COVID caused there to be no in-person 4-H Camp. Mark also volunteers with his church and with school clubs. Additionally, he and his friends periodically do river cleanups and clean litter from other areas like the schoolyard and roadsides. He is also a volunteer tutor. Mark was a focus group participant.

Mary

Mary is a White female in her third year as a 4-H Camp teen leader. Like some others, she missed a year of teen leadership in 2020 when there was no 4-H Camp due to COVID. Mary was a CIT for one year and a camper for five years. Mary graduated in 2022 but did not mention her plans for the future. Mary volunteers outside of camp by visiting the local nursing home residents during holidays, volunteering to help kids get ready for riding lessons, and assisting the instructor with those lessons if help is needed.

Paul

Paul is a Black male. He has been a 4-H Camp teen leader for two years, a CIT for one year, and a 4-H Camper for five years. His first year of eligibility to be a teen leader would have been 2020, but there was no camp due to COVID, and he was not involved in virtual camp leadership. Paul volunteers with his year-round 4-H program and with school clubs. His family does volunteer activities together as well. He was looking forward to college in the fall of 2022.

Racquet

Racquet is a Multicultural female of Black and Columbian heritage. She is of Hispanic ethnicity. Racquet has been a teen leader for two years, a CIT for one year, and a 4-H Camper for

three years. In 2021 she came to camp two different weeks as a teen leader because another county was having trouble filling their week, and youth from her county could attend twice in the same summer. This meant that it was her third 4-H Camp teen leader experience but only her second year. Racquet also volunteers through her school clubs, at the children's museum, and to a small degree at the homeless shelter, but she is only allowed to do certain tasks there because she is still a minor.

Susan

Susan is a White female in her third year as a 4-H Camp teen leader, including a virtual year in 2020. She spent one year as a CIT and three years as a camper. 4-H Camp was her only overnight camp, although she did participate in some girl scout day camps as a camper. Susan and her mother volunteer every week, picking up food from local grocery stores and delivering it to the food bank.

Zed

Zed is a White male. He was in his third year as a teen leader, having also completed one year as a CIT and three years as a camper. He did not engage in virtual camp leadership and, therefore, skipped a year of potential teen leadership during the COVID shutdown of 2020. In the fall of 2020, he transferred out of public school and into a military school, where he completed his last two years but still maintained connections to 4-H Camp and being a teen leader. He was looking forward to college in the fall of 2022. Zed volunteered with his local youth group and through student government volunteer activities. He also volunteered to be part of the CADRE at his military school during his senior year, which put him in charge of a flight of 36 other high school students.

Results

The research data presented is organized thematically. Following my data analysis plan

from chapter three, I began analyzing data from interviews and observations even while data

collection continued with other participants. After reading through the transcripts and making my

notes and memos, I used in vivo coding using the participants' own words and then grouped the

codes thematically using focused coding (Saldaña, 2016). I did this first for each individual

interview and focus group and then grouped the themes collectively. I coded observation data

using descriptive open coding since the notes on the observation sheets were my own words, not

those of the participants. I followed this with thematic analysis to link the open codes to

emerging themes (Durdella, 2019) for each individual observation and then grouped them as a

whole. After I analyzed the data from the three methods of data collection independently, I used

a third level of analysis with another layer of focused coding to connect and group the themes

further. I determined the significance of and meaning from the findings (Patton, 2002). I engaged

in epoché while analyzing the data. Following Moustakas' (1994) process for data analysis, I

engaged in phenomenological reduction and horizonalization of data where each statement was

given equal worth. I paid attention to trustworthiness, addressing issues of credibility,

transferability, dependability, and confirmability (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). The combined themes

from all data sources are presented in the following sections with the codes and their

corresponding themes and subthemes listed in Table 3. The first theme of 4-H Camp Culture had

three subthemes: relationships, personal growth, and shaping identities. Relationships included

the codes of connection, community, relationships, belonging, welcoming, family, and home.

Personal growth had the codes of passion, love, being encouraged, skills, learned, grow/growing,

and comfort zone. The shaping identities subtheme encompassed the code words of break from

outside world and be myself/ be themselves. The second theme of connection with others included the subthemes of caring teen leaders, positive role modeling, and youth-adult partnerships. Codes for the caring teen leaders subtheme included engaging with campers, looked up to teens, and always wanted to be a teen. The positive role modeling subtheme comprised role model, influence, and leading by example. The theme of youth-adult partnerships included codes of respect, trust, and support. The third theme was contribution, consisting of two subthemes: making an impact and generosity. Making an impact included the codes rewarding, gratifying, and impact. Generosity included the codes help/helping, contribute, and give back.

Table 3

Codes, Themes, and Subthemes

In Vivo Codes	Themes	Subthemes
Connection	4-H Camp Culture	Relationships
Relationships		
Belonging		
Welcoming		
Bond(ing)		
Community		
Friends		
Family		
Home		
Passion		Personal Growth
Love		
Skills		
Learned		
Grow(ing)		
Being encouraged		

In Vivo Codes	Themes	Subthemes
Comfort zone		
Break from outside world		Shaping Identities
Be myself/ be themselves		
Looked up to teens	Connection with Others	Caring teen leaders
Always wanted to be a teen		
Engaging with campers		
Encouraging campers		
Helping campers		
Role model/ model		Positive role modeling
Lead by example		
Influence		
Respect		Youth Adult Partnerships
Trust		
Support		
Rewarding	Contribution	Making an impact
Gratifying		
Impact		
Help		Generosity
Contribute		
Give back		

4-H Camp Culture

4-H Camp is an integral part of the lives of the teens in this study. The camp culture and the relationships formed there are so special that they cannot help but keep coming back and being part of it all again and again. When describing this passion for camp, Aaron said it is "always the highlight of my year." Dream indicated, "as a leader here at Camp, I really think that I found something that I'm really passionate about." Liana commented, "4-H is my other family."

Perhaps Brooke summed up this general feeling best when she said, "I keep coming back because I love it so much…It's a part of my life…[If I didn't come,] I would feel like a piece of my heart is missing."

Relationships

The 4-H Camp teen leaders described forming special bonds with others when they were campers and continuing to maintain those relationships through the years, plus developing new connections with fellow teen leaders, adult volunteers, Extension Agents, and camp staff members. The teens in this study referred to the significance of relationships they formed with their teens and other campers when they were campers, the relationships they formed with their campers in their role as teen leaders, the bonds they formed with other teens, and the deep respect and connection they felt with their adult partners in leadership. Catherine referenced her time as a camper when she said, "But I really do like the memories and like the friendship that you create and especially with the teen leaders and the campers. It's great." As a camper, she also observed the close relationships shared by her teen leaders. When asked about experiences that made her want to be a teen leader, she shared the following:

It was seeing the dynamic of the teens, I guess. So, like how they were really good friends, and they were really hyper, really like, 'yeah, let's go to camp!' And it was just something that I really wanted to do.

Maggie described the impact of camp relationships for her even now.

I'd say 4-H Camp probably, it's like one big family almost. Like, I know most of the campers here by name, and if I don't know them by name, then I probably have eaten lunch with them, or I know them by a class they've taken, and they're great. I know a lot of the ages of the campers. And I think with the adults and the teens and campers and staff members, it's like one big - like either one big family or like a bunch of my friends are getting together and

hanging out all week. It just feels like I'm away from home, but I feel totally comfortable here. It's like a second home.

Mark, too, reflected on his relationships with campers from the teen perspective when he said the following:

Definitely having a rowdy kid at the start of the week that you just want to tear your hair out, but at the end of the week, you're like best buddies, and they listen to you, and you're having fun with them. You get to know them a bit, what they like, what they don't like, definitely working out the kinks in your cabin. Sort of creating bonds with each individual camper. That really feels good.

For Mary, the importance of building those relationships emerged when she described her favorite thing about being a teen leader at 4-H Camp:

Definitely the relationships you make. The ones that I've made with counselors and campers. [It] goes for everybody. And even staffers. Being able to bond with them… And it's just the relationships you make during it are just something you can't make anywhere else.

Zed described the relationships formed at camp as part of the camp experience itself.

The camp community. One thing I like about it is it's tight-knit, but it's not at the same time. So, everybody knows each other. All the counselors know each other. And by the end of the week, most of the campers know everybody. So that's why it's very tight-knit. But at the same time, it's very open to bringing in new counselors or CITs…We have first-year campers every single year, and campers will come back, and they are like, 'hey, I remember you. And I remember you. And, hey, who's this guy?' And then they get to meet new friends. So, it's tight-knit but open to creating those new relationships. And that's one thing that I really like about it.

Many of the teens had great things to say about the adults, Extension Agents, and staff members they worked with at camp. Mark may have summed it up when he said the following:

> What I'm referring to is the staff or the people I work with throughout the whole year [adult volunteers and Extension Agents], our monthly trainings. You get to know them pretty well and its sort of like a secondary family. And I really enjoy that aspect of it … I've gotten to know my adult staff very well because I've been with 4-H for so long. And I've gotten to know all the other teens very well.

Relationship building was evident through observation as well. Maggie referred to her campers as "friends." She also frequently engaged the campers around her in conversation, asking about their day so far and other random topics. Braedyn held a shade umbrella for his fellow teens at the pool. Zed sat at a picnic table during pool time, and there was a steady stream of campers coming up to him. He interacted with each one as if they were best friends (and they may have been for that week of camp). He and another teen were at that table the entire time. When the stream of campers slacked off, they made the rounds at the edge of the pool, checking in with campers before heading back to the table to talk with more campers. These were just a few ways in evidence of the relationships formed and maintained at 4-H Camp.

Personal Growth

The teens described how participation in 4-H Camp through the years, particularly in their role as a 4-H Camp teen leader, has led to their personal growth and how they also enjoy seeing that growth in the campers with whom they work. Dream spoke about one way in which she knew camp teen leadership had made a difference in her life:

> Definitely being able to speak in front of people, especially because I used to have really bad social – well I still have bad social anxiety – but I used to be really bad at talking in

front of people…But growing my social skills is what's come out of this. I'm able to hold

a conversation better and also be able to talk with campers.

Many other teens discussed ways they had grown and skills they had learned and improved as

4-H Camp teen leaders (Table 4).

Table 4

Teen Descriptions, in Their Own Words, of Experiencing Personal Growth

Participant	Identified Personal Growth
Aaron	Need skills developed at camp in real life
	Leadership skills
	Communication skills
	Being more outgoing
	Willing to step forward
	Willing to take charge
	Being able to talk to people
Braedyn	Making conversation
	Adapting
	Getting better at various skills
	Getting others involved
	Communication skills
	Organization
Brooke	Responsibility
	Communication skills
	Learning how to treat other people
	Time management
	Learned to be a better person
Catherine	People skills
	Leadership
	Patience
	Focus
	Organization
Dream	Learned to speak in front of people
	Growing my social skills
	Learned to overcome social anxiety
	Feeling comfortable as a leader
	A sense of fulfillment

Participant	Identified Personal Growth
Jay	Developing relationships
	Leadership
	Communication skills
	Observation skills
	Skills will transfer to professional/workplace role
Kane	Leadership skills
	Interaction skills
	Responsibility
	Accountability
	Business first and fun afterwards
	Cooperation
	Teamwork
Kay	Learned how to work with others
	Responsibility
	Being respectful
	Learned a lot of character skills
	Working with others
	Helps me be more open-minded to try new things
	Be confident to talk to other people
	Easier to build relationships
Liana	It builds character
	Taught me to be a confident person
	It fills me up; makes me positive
	Learn how to interact with other people
	Leadership
	Responsibility
	Teamwork
	Pushing my comfort zone
Maggie	Improved communication skills
	Improved leadership
	Improved skills in adapting and adjusting
	adjusting to [new situations]
	grow as an individual – shaped who I am
Mark	Helps me grow as a person
	Leadership experience
	Learning time management
	Working as a leadership team with weaknesses and strengths
	Socialize with different people
	Gain trust and respect
	Compromise [mediation skills]
	Interaction with younger kids

Participant	Identified Personal Growth
Mary	Gain life skills
	Confidence
	Leadership
	Quick thinking
Paul	Everybody can be themselves
	Freedom of expression
	Autonomy
	Learn how to talk to children – the same way as anyone else
	Organizing a little bit better
Racquet	Meeting different people and finding commonalities
	Learning to manage different personalities
	Exposing yourself to new things
	Leading by example
	Time management
	Learning to manage people
	Pushing you out of your comfort zone
	Helps you become well-rounded
Susan	Personal growth
	Puts you out of your comfort zone; Pushes you a little bit
	Learn to work through high-stress situations
	Learn to adapt
Zed	Develop confidence
	Learn to deal with/teach/shape kids
	Gives you a perspective change
	Ability to adapt
	Leadership
	Empathy
	Learning to interact with others
	Social skills
	You thrive
	Comfortably pushed outside your comfort zone

Shaping Identities

Going a step beyond describing the personal growth they experienced while attending

4-H Camp in both camper and teen roles, several participants in this study identified 4-H Camp

as a place where they could be themselves and explore more about who they are. Paul

commented, "I like how everybody can kind of relax here and can be themselves if they choose.

And I like that. There's a lot of freedom of expression. And I appreciate that a lot." Maggie echoed this idea when she said, "[Campers] can be who they want to be and that's my favorite part about camp...I can just be myself, and I can be confident in myself." Later in the interview, Maggie came back to this concept when she said, "I realized that was just a part of me, you know, growing into myself, becoming my own person, and becoming the social butterfly…and I think that camp has helped me flourish and become this confident, talkative person that I was not." She spoke about how her experiences as both a camper and a teen helped her to "grow as an individual. [4-H Camp] shaped who I am." Dream described 4-H Camp as "a community, a place where people can be themselves." This concept also received attention during the focus group sessions, where Maggie and Dream both shared more about this topic. Maggie shared the following:

> I feel like camp is more like my second home. I feel like I can truly be myself at Camp. I don't have to put on, like, this face. I don't have to act a certain way like I do maybe at school or something. I can truly just be me. So, I think I describe camp as home.

Dream had similar comments when she described 4-H Camp as an "environment where people can just feel free to be themselves and not worry about it." Liana, Kay, and Susan also shared feelings of being able to be themselves without fear of judgment and experiencing some of the personal growth previously described as a result. Liana stated the following:

> And 4-H is one of the biggest things that has built me up into who I am today. It's been one of the things I look forward to every year, you know...And something really exciting is honestly a place where I get to be myself.

Connection with Others

Connecting with others at camp encompassed forging relationships with campers, fellow

teen leaders, adult leaders, Extension Agents, and camp staff. Some connections described were stronger than others, but each teen participant described one or more meaningful connections they had made with others in their role as a 4-H Camp teen leader. Many participants described connections made as campers as well.

Caring Teen Leaders

Nine of the sixteen participants mentioned relationships with their teens when they were campers as part of what inspired them to want to be teen leaders when they were the right age. While most relayed positive relationships, one teen shared of a bad experience with her teen leader, which is described in the outlier section of this chapter. For the other eight, they had positive experiences of being made welcome and feeling inspired that teenagers genuinely cared for them and helped them navigate camp life. As they shared their stories, their body language changed. Some became nostalgic, whereas others became animated. Each one conveyed through not only their words but also their tone and body language how important these relationships between camper and teen were to them during their camper years. For them, their teens made their 4-H Camp experience a positive one and, when reflecting on it, inspired them to want to become that teen for other campers. Braedyn and Maggie both described experiences of being homesick as campers, and their teens helped them overcome missing home so that they could have positive experiences at 4-H Camp that kept them coming back year after year. Braedyn shared the following:

> I have had that experience when I was younger of feeling homesick, and having a teen that was like 'you're gonna have so much fun'…I think that teen really put me in a positive mindset and really enhanced my experience of how I enjoyed camp. I feel like without that teen, I would have been a little bit down.

A little later in the conversation, when asked if he would have come back to camp the following

year if he hadn't had the help of his teen to get through his first year of homesickness, Braedyn responded, "I'm not quite sure." Maggie's experience was equally profound. She was so homesick that she had made up her mind that she didn't like camp and wanted to go home. Her teen leader took the time to talk with her and help her overcome that sadness to stick it out and have what turned into a great week of camp that forever changed her 4-H Camping trajectory. She vividly described this experience:

> Well, my first year as a camper I was a homesick camper, and so the first night I was crying in my bed, and my teen leader, she got up with me and we talked it out. I wanted to go home so bad. And she's like 'no don't go home. You're gonna have so much fun, I promise'… I was struggling really hard and my teen leader helped me go through it.

When asked how that experience made her feel, Maggie responded, "really good." She went on to explain that:

> It kinda shows that the kids do listen to us and we have an influence on how maybe the rest of their week goes. If they have a good week of camp or if they come back next year. I like to think that the teens have a pretty good influence on that and it makes me feel like I'm one of the people that helps have a great week and have lots of returning campers.

Kane described having trouble fitting in as a first-year camper who was awkward and didn't come with friends but was welcomed by the teen leader in his cabin and other teen leaders who helped him understand what was going on and helped him learn the songs and the routines of camp life:

> I wasn't quite sure my first year, because everything was kind of a mess. I wasn't very involved…and then the teen leaders are doing their best to help that camper reach their potential of 'you're here to have fun, right? Well, let me help you with that.' Like let me

help - because you're not quite understanding the first time. Because I certainly didn't

know what was going on around me. Like I saw with the enthusiasm song, for example.

It's the longest song I've ever heard, but I can hear everybody confidently knowing every

single word to it, having fun with it. I was like 'wow I want to get to that at the end of the

week'…[those experiences] make me feel welcome at 4-H camp. I feel like, no matter

which [4-H] camp I may go to, I feel like every county, every Center that runs a camp

like this, we all have an understanding of we're here to have fun and look out for each

other, to again make the spirit, make the experience as best as possible.

Paul shared his personal story of how his teen leaders helped him through a potentially difficult
time and inspired him to want to be that kind of leader for others.

My first year, it would have been in 2014, I think. My two teen leaders were – One of

their names was Ben and the other was JJ. I thought they were funny and I thought they

were nice. And Ben, he didn't make fun of me or anything - because I was a bedwetter. It

is what it is. And I had an accident. I told him and he kept it on the down-low. He cleaned

my bed for me. He let everybody know who needed to know to get it taken care of. It got

handled. They planted the seed [for me to be a 4-H Camp teen leader]…And they made

everything better.

4-H Camp teen leaders have an incredible role of responsibility and hold the power to shape the

camp experiences of the campers in their care. These were just a few of the stories told by the

participants of how their teen leaders inspired these participants to want to be caring teen leaders

like them. Perhaps even more telling is that the question that generated these responses did not

prompt them to tell of experiences with their teen leaders. The participants shared this

information when asked, "What experiences did you have as a camper or CIT that influenced

your decision to be a teen leader?" The care and attention shown by their teen leaders when they were campers impacted them such that they were inspired to become 4-H Camp teen leaders themselves.

This caring showed in how the teen leaders behaved while at 4-H Camp. Kay called role during their group meeting and found one camper absent. He had walked away from the group and was resting under a tree. She quickly located him and came to check on him while other teens were starting the group activity. He had a headache, and she asked about how much water he had drunk since lunchtime, sat and chatted with him for a few minutes to check in about his day and his week so far, and then let medical staff know about the situation so that they could check on him. Zed demonstrated this caring in canoeing class. He was prepared to go solo in a kayak until he noticed a camper who was not matched with a partner. Zed walked over and, with excitement, asked if he could be partners with the camper. Zed was doing his part to make sure the camper was included and made to feel wanted and appreciated as a partner. Other teens also showed a high level of caring for their campers. Jay made sure to check in with each camper and involve them in activities during games class. Brooke did the same thing, even starting a separate, more sedentary game for campers who wanted a break from the active exertion of gau-gau. Racquet attended to a camper at the pool whose toe was bleeding. She sat and talked to the camper calmly, joking with him, while another teen went for first aid supplies. She kept up the small talk while camp staff attended to the wound. After making sure he was happy and off to his next activity, she got some extra band-aids to take back to her cabin so that one of her girls with blisters could dry off in the cabin and put them on her toes.

Positive Role Modeling

Participants described their interactions with campers and the feelings evoked by those interactions as reasons they love being 4-H Camp teen leaders despite the struggles and stressors

also associated with the volunteer role. Kane told of his approach to leadership:

> [I try] being the person that's there for the campers. Every year, I try to make sure it's better. Like I'll catch myself kind of reflecting on what happened this past year while I was at 4-H camp. What did I do that I could have done differently, or better? And then I try to better myself with that the next year.

Mary described her experiences as a 4-H Camp teen leader: "I love the atmosphere here. I love what we do. I love being able to give those campers somebody to look up to." Racquet described the importance of her being a good role model from the campers' viewpoint when she said, "but [at camp] you're learning by example, not by word, which is really cool." She recognized that as a teen, campers watched what she did and how she reacted, and those campers often adapted their behavior accordingly. Maggie got a little choked with emotion when describing how "for me it was wanting to be a role model to the campers like my teen leaders were to me."

Observations showed that this occurred not only in the presence of campers and adults but also in downtime, where the teens had some time to themselves. Kay overheard a teen talking about how expensive the ice cream was, with the conversation headed in a negative direction. She told him to "shut it down." With those simple words, Kay reminded him of his need to be a positive role model in words and deeds. Dream did something as simple as picking up a piece of trash (not hers) and throwing it away. Catherine and Racquet were just two of the many teens observed who modeled appropriate behavior by actively engaging in all activities enthusiastically, encouraging others to do the same.

Youth-Adult Partnerships

Interviews touched on youth-adult partnerships (YAPs), but this area needed further fleshing out in the focus groups. The teen leaders participating in these focus groups described mixed experiences with adult leaders regarding YAPs. Some expressed a high level of trust and

partnership, while others didn't have much interaction or partnership. Maggie described it as follows:

> We all have like a really good relationship with each other, like the adults. I have a really good relationship with the adults, because I've grown up with those adults being at Camp my entire time at Camp. So, they've gotten to see me grow up into a teen leader, so I think that, you know, kind of brings it all in like I've known these people my entire life, so we kind of have like a family relationship almost but at camp it's like I know I can go to these people if I have a problem, if a camper is having a problem. And so I think, you know, we have pretty good relationships. You know, whether it's something serious or we're having fun, or you know, we're nervous about a certain aspect about camp. I think the relationship between not only me and my extension agent, but between the other teen leaders and their extension agents and the adults, I think it's a really good, healthy, strong family relationship.

Maggie described an even stronger partnership with her Extension Agent:

> Before camp, we have a bunch of trainings and actually, I'm actually this past year the Secretary of the teens in action club with her, that she ran this year. And preparing for camp, we always have trainings and stuff and I kind of, being the most you know veteran, I guess, teen leader of my county, I help her run those and then I also help her with like raising money for scholarships for camp. And at camp we have a really good relationship. She's always like - I mean with everybody -she's always like you know if you need anything to come to me, come to one of the other extension agents. And my cluster has a really good group of extension agents. It's like they're like the dream team, honestly.

Mark shared that the adults with whom he worked were "really warm and welcoming, and so

you can be really open with them. And if you have any problems, you can go to them…it's a very good working relationship." Dream described the relationship as follows:

> So, the adults they've been, they're consistent in how they support you. So, like they're always willing to learn and then they're always willing to check in, and they genuinely care about you. But also they sort of like, rather than like in some spaces, where if you come to an adult with a problem, they'll be like 'oh yeah, yeah, I'll get to it', and then they just like never bring it up again or something like that, [at 4-H] they always make sure to check back in and make sure things are going well and then also just making sure that they follow through. And then another big thing is that they have trust with us, and I think that, without that trust, our trainings and our relationships with our adults and extension agents wouldn't be as impactful.

Kane shared that "we don't really work with the adults at Camp rather than the fact that, like they're just present for the week of camp that we go for our county." He found a greater sense of partnership with his Extension Agent, who he described as:

> willing to take questions anytime of the year about 4-H because he's super passionate about it. He's willing to work with anybody. He's willing to just have it get done and willing to work things to accommodate for people. The fact that he's just putting in the effort very passionate about it. I think that's something that me and him sure have in common.

When I asked the teens if they would classify the relationships they just described as ones where they were treated as equal partners, Aaron responded, "largely I feel like there is a pretty equal relationship between everyone as all [of us] have to rely on others for various things. Everyone affects one another in a way." Maggie, Kane, and Dream agreed, but also mentioned that there

were limitations. Maggie described the "chain of command" where each person had a specific role to fill, and there were limitations to what a teen could do. For instance, "they have certain responsibilities, of course, we can't deal with as teens…Like we can't be dealing with, you know, writing letters to maybe CPS [Child Protective Services] and stuff like that." Kane described it as follows:

> [We are] equals to an extent, because there's like only so far you can go. Like oh I'm a leader, but like I'm not running the whole camp. Like, I'm in charge of kids. I have to make sure everyone's all right, of course, make sure the experience is all right for campers. But I'm also not like running all of the classes, running the meals. I'm not in charge of everything.

Mark's response was similar. He described the partnership as follows:

> I definitely say that the adults are sort of above us in terms of ranking at 4-H. We sort of fall under their wing in terms of I guess the working ladder… So, I'd say it's a true partnership. Yeah, I'd say it is, but there's definitely different obligated roles and we sort of fall under them in the ladder.

Dream also recognized how the roles were different but that they still had a strong partnership:

> The equal part, it's more of an equal respect. But they have more authority. So, they still show us the same amount of respect that we show them, but we know that if there's a serious problem, we have to go to them, and we rely on them.

They described a different kind of relationship with the camp staff, most of whom they only work with for their week of camp and don't share the strong bonds they have with the adults and Extension Agents from their camping cluster. Mark described how the partnership was different:

> We don't know them as well. I mean you get to know them throughout the week. But I

think it's a good working relationship. When we interact with them the most is during our

classes when we're helping out…they're supporting and they help you learn the ropes and

they help you teach others. Yeah, it's definitely different than the personal connections

we have with our adult volunteers and our co-teens, but it's still a good relationship.

Kane described the camp staff as "super friendly and welcoming" but felt almost like they were

"the celebrity walk[ing] right by you." He agreed that "when you do get to work certain classes

as a counselor, it does help you form more of a stronger bond with the staff members." Dream

mentioned that "sometimes it doesn't click with the staff… And it can be kind of awkward to

navigate that and get to know them."

Although unable to observe the YAP aspects involved in planning and preparing for

camp, the actions of a well-oiled leadership team of youth and adults were evident at camp. The

camaraderie and comfort level with each other was evident in a basketball game where Jay and

an adult volunteer were playing with some campers. They were able to good-naturedly tease

each other, indicating the level of trust and friendship that existed between them. Brooke shared

leadership responsibility in a food class with an adult leader. At one point, the adult was called

away to attend to a bee sting, and Brooke stepped in seamlessly to continue the instruction. The

trust the adult had in leaving the class in Brooke's hands, combined with the flawless transition,

demonstrates the strong YAP. Aaron's story is a little different. He apparently had experienced

some trouble running his pack meetings during the week and privately asked an adult to help

monitor one particularly unruly camper and intervene if needed. Later, during the pack meeting,

he spoke to the talking campers to get them to pay attention. Most of the campers refocused

themselves, but one camper in the group continued to be disruptive. The adult at the meeting

supported Aaron by using a firm voice to restate the need to pay attention. The adult confided

later that this was Aaron's first time in charge of a pack and that he had specifically requested help and support during the pack meeting. This reliance upon each other again shows a positive relationship between the teens and adults and a solid working relationship of mutual trust and support – a strong youth-adult partnership.

Contribution

The contribution theme broke into two subthemes, making an impact and generosity. This theme emerged as youth participants expressed how their 4-H Camp teen leadership experiences made them feel.

Making an Impact

Multiple teens shared about making a positive impact at 4-H Camp and how it made them feel. When asked how his week was going, Zed responded:

> It's going good. A few bumps along the road with some troublesome campers, but I almost like dealing with them more because first day they're like, 'I don't want to be here. I'm homesick.' But then throughout the week they get better or they find a class that they really like and you can talk to them about the class. So, it's almost like working with them to get them to like camp is more rewarding.

Racquet shared that knowing she was making a difference gave her a sense of purpose:

> Okay not to get like too existential here, but like there's really a purpose at what I'm doing. Like me being nice and saying good things isn't all for naught. Like okay, it's actually affecting people and what you're doing is important. You have a purpose to be doing this…So it's like a good thing, a fundamental thing that we're learning. So, I love to see little kids come here and be like, that's really cool.

Susan spoke of how knowing she was making an impact made her feel when she said, "you feel so successful in what you're doing and knowing that you're making an impact on someone's life."

Kay told a story of helping a camper who constantly had crying tantrums when things didn't go her way. Kay recognized that she had the potential to influence how the camper handled difficult situations, not just at camp but potentially carrying that over into other situations beyond camp. After a serious conversation and continued encouragement, she saw a significant reduction in the number of tantrums each day. Kay commented, "I could have changed her life right there by having that conversation. Because you have talks like that in your life. You never know what could change a person's life. And that's what matters to me as a counselor."

A conversation overheard during the observation phase between Kane and two other teens highlighted this idea of making a positive impact as a driving force for teens volunteering as 4-H Camp teen leaders. They were chatting about their struggles with campers in their cabins and packs, but then Kane and the others also reminded each other of why they were there and how good it made them feel to be helping the campers.

Generosity

Participants in this study repeatedly used words such as contribute, help, and give back, which led to the subtheme of generosity. They described experiences ranging from fun and exciting to trying and stressful. However, each returned to the rewarding or gratifying feeling they gained through helping. Susan stated that it "makes you feel good knowing you're doing something to help someone." Racquet said, "I like it because I'm working towards something greater. I'm just a small part of a really big machine and I'm going to do my part that I can help. That's a really good feeling." Catherine said, "I want to be the person that campers can go to. I want to be the helping hand." Brooke mentioned making sure every camper felt included when she said the following:

> When we Sallee [at the dances] and we go in the middle, we like make a circle around
>
> everyone. I always try and pick out like the little shy kids that aren't really getting to

dance with other people. And if you dance with them, it just makes them feel so much

better, and that's my favorite part.

That night at the dance during evening program, Brooke repeatedly did just that. She found the

campers who hadn't taken a turn around the circle and drew them in. She wasn't the only one.

Other teens were doing the same thing.

While discussing the concept of volunteering, Jay brought the discussion back to 4-H

Camp when he said the following:

I just like it. I just like the community, helping the community, and giving back to the

community. I know I was once a camper too, so those teens and the adult volunteers take

time away from their days to be here to watch me, so I feel like I will return the favor to

the future coming on.

The teens' generosity in helping others was evident in all of the observations. Kane helped

campers make sure their arm guards were fastened correctly in archery. Paul helped a camper

gain confidence in herself (and let her know he had faith in her) as he coaxed her and assisted her

as she explained the rules to a camper who was late to class instead of simply doing it himself.

Mary, as with all of the teens, helped campers find seats in the dining hall and checked in with

them about how much water they had been drinking, helping pour cups of water.

Outlier Data and Findings

In addition to the wonderful descriptions the 4-H Camp teen leader research participants

gave about their camp experiences, they also readily admitted that it wasn't all fun and games.

They talked about some negative aspects as well. Additionally, one participant, Brooke, had a

very different experience with her teen leaders when she was a camper than the experiences

relayed by the other teens. These unexpected findings are detailed below.

Stress of Being a 4-H Camp Teen Leader

In their answers about how camp was going for them during the week of the interviews and observations, and in general comments to other questions, the teen participants painted an accurate picture of what it was like to be a 4-H Camp teen leader, including the not-so-great experiences. Maggie described being a teen leader as "stressful." Aaron stated that this year he was "less stressed than my first two years." Susan mentioned that she learned how to "handle high-stress situations" as a teen. Kay referred to her week up to that point as "a little challenging." Braedyn described "a few flaws" where things didn't go exactly as they should have. Racquet described the conditions as "hot and sweaty." Mark described the week as getting off to a "rough start" and added, "as always." Despite these negative experiences, or perhaps because of successfully overcoming them, these teens showed a commitment and a drive to be 4-H Camp teen leaders. Liana referred to it as "something that people that don't go to 4-H Camp wouldn't understand". Mary described the good and the bad as really going hand in hand and suggested that it was overcoming the bad that made the camp experiences so rewarding:

> I have dealt with a lot of stubborn campers who just don't want to participate, don't want to do anything. They say they hate camp. They want to just leave, and being able to get them to actually enjoy it; it's really rewarding. And then homesickness, dealing with a homesick camper, and finally getting them distracted and feeling a lot better. Those are what make being a counselor worth it because it's really stressful. It's a lot of work. We put in a lot of money of our own money to make this camp good for the kids. We don't get paid. And we're watching these kids overnight for four days. It's a lot. So, the most rewarding thing is being able to help kids out and make sure they're having a good time. So, like with homesickness, you don't want a kid to be homesick. So, when they're

homesick and you're able to fix it and help get their mind off of it and move on to

something else, it is really rewarding. Having a really stubborn kid who doesn't want to

sing and doesn't want to do anything, he doesn't want to involve themselves, um, things

like that, and being able to get them actually involved in singing and enjoying camp. It

feels so good to feel like you actually did something.

Negative Experience

Brooke's story that she told about her experiences with her teen leaders when she was a

camper contrasted with the stories told by many of the other participants, as described earlier.

Brooke did not look up to her teens like many of her peers did. When responding to the question

about her experiences as a camper or a CIT that encouraged her to become a 4-H Camp teen

leader, she said:

Honestly, when I was a camper, our teens were different than they are now. Like we've

all been talking about it all week long, but we feel like our teens were so scary and a little

mean to us when we were campers. But we've also talked about knowing that it's made us

want to be better for these kids because we know how we felt that, like having to go up to

someone and asking a question and just been so scared that you just don't do it at all, and

we'd never want the kids to feel like they couldn't talk to us or ask us questions. So, as a

camper, I was like I'm not going to be like that, when I became a teen, *if* I stick with it.

Like, I want to be someone nice, someone fun, and someone that they're going to

remember and want to come back and see again.

Research Question Responses

This section summarizes the collective responses of the teen participants to the central

research question and the three sub-questions to understand better the lived experiences that

motivate them to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. These responses were derived from careful analysis of responses from interviews and observations and supported with data from observations. Refer to Table 5 for a condensed version.

Central Research Question

What lived experiences do teens identify that motivate them to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders? 4-H Camp experiences create a culture that draws the teens back in leadership roles and keeps them returning. Mark stated it as follows:

It's [4-H Camp is] more the environment that you're injected into as a kid that you learn to love, and it brings you back again and again. And I think, by the end of my camper years, I wanted to give back to 4-H, and I think it's a big part of it, giving back.

Sub-Question One

What experiences may be reflective of the tenets of positive youth development (PYD)? Many of the experiences relayed by the teens were related to PYD. They described finding a place to belong that welcomed them and allowed them to be themselves while also helping them gain valuable life skills. They formed bonds and made lasting connections. Kay commented, "The bonds that you create with people at Camp mean so much more than just going to camp."

Sub-Question Two

What beliefs regarding benefits of being a 4-H Camp teen leader contribute to the teens' motivation? When they first started as 4-H Camp teen leaders, the main benefit that drew them was getting to come back to 4-H Camp for another year. Susan phrased it as follows:

I loved this camp so much as a camper that I knew the only way I was going to get to come back and enjoy the surroundings was to be a teen leader. And I always looked up to mine, so it was kind of exciting having that idea that I was going to get to be one of them

and kind of be like that second parent to a bunch of kids.

Table 5

Research Question Responses

Research Question	Related Themes	Summary of Evidence
CRQ: What lived experiences do teens identify that motivate them to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders?	4-H Camp Culture Connection With Others Contribution	Teen participants described 4-H Camp as a second home where they foster relationships, experience growth, and shape who they are as individuals. They are motivated to return as teen leaders because of their prior camp experiences, the family atmosphere, and the desire to give back to the program that gave so much to them.
SQ1: What experiences may be reflective of the tenets of positive youth development (PYD)?	4-H Camp Culture Connection With Others Contribution	At 4-H Camp, these teens found a welcoming place where they felt a sense of belonging and connection with others. As teens, they were part of YAPs, where they were valued. They were also provided an avenue where they could grow and practice their skills, develop their identities, and make meaningful contributions.
SQ2: What beliefs regarding benefits of being a 4-H Camp teen leader contribute to the teens' motivation?	4-H Camp Culture Contribution	The participants initially saw the benefits as continuing to come to camp while also making a difference through their contributions. Once in the role, they realized the additional benefits of personal growth and developing skills to help them be successful presently and in the future.
SQ3: What experiences motivate teens to continue in 4-H Camp leadership roles after the first year?	4-H Camp Culture Connection With Others Contribution	The feelings the teens received from the impact they made helping campers, combined with the relationships they made with campers, fellow-teen leaders, and adults, motivated the teens in this study to return.

Over time, they perceived the benefit as the skills they learned and how they grew as individuals

through their roles as 4-H Camp teen leaders. Racquet mentioned "exposure" to people who "are

so different from each other… and somehow they all have something in common," and that it helps you to be more "well rounded" and the experience is "preparing you a little better for what might come along."

Sub-Question Three

What experiences motivate teens to continue in 4-H Camp leadership roles after the first year? The feeling of gratification from making a positive impact on the lives of the campers, along with the bonds they form with their fellow leadership team members, brings them back. Paul mentioned that he "like[d] the effect that I make doing what I do" and that he enjoyed "just spending time with people that I care about…I've got to see it all just one more time, and that happens over and over again."

<div align="center">

Summary

</div>

4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia are motivated to fill that role because of the sense of belonging and connection they find at camp, combined with the positive impact they make in the lives of others. The first identified theme of 4-H Camp culture included the subthemes of relationships, personal growth, and shaping identities. This theme showcased the importance of 4-H Camp experiences and the feelings evoked by them for the teen participants. The second theme of connection with others encompassed subthemes of caring teen leaders, positive role models, and youth-adult partnerships. Participants described forming close bonds with their fellow teen leaders, adult leaders, Extension Agents, and to a lesser extent, the camp staff. Participants also described fostering relationships with their campers and watching them grow through the week and sometimes over a span of years. The third theme of contribution encompassed the subthemes of making an impact and generosity. The stories the participants shared about helping campers and how it made them feel demonstrated the hold that 4-H Camp

has over them. It also showed their readiness to give back to the program that had given them so much and to make positive contributions through their volunteer efforts.

The participants admitted that their 4-H Camp experiences were not all positive and that they experienced stress, frustration, and anxiety in their role as 4-H Camp teen leaders. However, the teens also agreed that what they got out of the experience made it all worthwhile.

CHAPTER FIVE: CONCLUSION

Overview

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences that motivate teenagers to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. I could not locate existing literature about the problem of why teenagers volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia or elsewhere. The findings from this study provide a good understanding of the phenomenon under investigation and the lived experiences of the teens that motivate them to volunteer in this challenging but rewarding role. This chapter provides interpretations of the findings, implications for practice, limitations and delimitations, and recommendations for future research.

Discussion

Data from this study arose from rich descriptions generated through individual interviews and focus groups where participants could build upon each other's responses. It was also supported by data generated from observations of the teen participants carrying out their assigned duties and during free time at 4-H Camp. The in vivo codes used by participants in interviews and focus groups describing their lived experiences combined with the descriptive codes from observing each participant were grouped into themes and subthemes to report the findings better. This chapter not only shares those findings but also interprets them in light of literature indirectly connected to the problem.

Interpretation of Findings

This section shows how the findings align or fail to align with existing research tangential to the problem under study. It also includes insights from the findings that emerged as the participants told their stories about the experiences that initially motivated them to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia and what keeps them returning after that first year. The

findings reveal three main themes, each with two or three subthemes addressing the problem of why teenagers volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. These themes are camp culture, connection with others, and contribution.

Camp Culture

Camp culture includes the subthemes of relationships, personal growth, and shaping identities. 4-H Camp, like other overnight camping experiences away from parents, creates an environment where youth develop strong relationships with fellow campers and with leaders (Garst & Wittington, 2020; Leff et al., 2015; Paris, 2008; Sibthorpe et al., 2022). Something about this experience draws many youth back again and again. Some, like the participants in this study, continue coming back in their teen years. As 4-H Camp teen leaders, they forge even stronger connections and strengthen their commitment to return. The teens in this study fondly described relationships formed when they were campers and current relationships with the campers they supervise. They also described relationships with fellow teen leaders, adult leaders, Extension Agents, and to some extent, camp staff members. The strong bonds and mutual connections that develop at camp form within a welcoming environment where youth find acceptance, support, and a place to belong. Within this environment, they also experience personal growth that helps them discover more about themselves. The experiences help shape their identities.

4-H Camp Participation Impacts Lives. Each of the teens in this study attended 4-H Camp as campers, with some attending additional camps. They receive something from their camp experience that repeatedly draws them back, learning and growing. By the time they are too old to come as campers, they are poised to take the next step into leadership roles, largely because of the skills they have built through their camper years. The teens shared meaningful

accounts that have helped them gain skills and adopt behaviors that help them as they contribute not only within their respective 4-H Camping communities but also within other communities of which they are a part.

4-H Camp Participation Contributes to Personal Development. Camp experiences reflect the trio of competence, relatedness, and autonomy described by Ryan and Deci (2017). Youth develop skills, form connections with others, achieve a sense of self, and discover their identities. These factors contribute to motivation as part of self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000; Ryan & Deci, 2017). Additionally, the findings connect to relational developmental systems theory (RDST). With the RDST bidirectional relationship between individuals and their surrounding environment (Lerner, Johnson, et al., 2015; Overton, 2015), the 4-H Camp context and all that transpires during the camp week become an important factor in a young person's development. Every teen in this study listed numerous areas where they had experienced personal growth. Some frequently mentioned areas were leadership, management, communication, social skills, and responsibility.

Connection to Others

The theme of connection to others included the subthemes of caring teen leaders, positive role modeling, and youth-adult partnerships. Having a caring teen leader as a camper helped these participants have a sense of belonging within the group and, in some cases, helped them overcome feelings of homesickness or other difficult situations during their camper years. As current teen leaders, they understand how their actions impact the campers they work with because they've been where their campers are now. They strive to interact positively with the campers to help them have a successful camp experience. This concept connects to the next subtheme of positive role modeling. These 4-H Camp teen leaders understand that what they do

and say influences the campers' experiences, and consequently, they must be positive role models. The 4-H Camp teen leaders work with others in the leadership team to make camp possible for the campers. This working relationship takes the form of youth-adult partnerships.

Connection and PYD. Camp experiences conveyed by participants describe a context where they feel welcome and supported. They find a place to belong where they can develop meaningful relationships with campers, teens, and adults. This concept reflects crucial pieces of the frameworks used within the 4-H Program, including the Five Cs Model of Positive Youth Development (Hershberg et al., 2015), the Essential Elements of 4-H (White et al., 2018), the Targeting Life Skills model (Hendricks, 1998; Norman & Jordan, 2006/2018), and the 4-H Thriving model (Arnold, 2018). In each of these models, belonging and connection provide youth with a safe place where they feel included, find acceptance, and develop meaningful relationships with others (Arnold, 2018; Hendricks, 1998; Hershberg et al., 2015; Lile et al., 2021; Norman & Jordan, 2006/2018; White et al., 2018). This belonging continues through their experiences as 4-H Camp teen leaders and perhaps becomes stronger as the relationships they form further develop over time.

Youth-Adult Partnerships. Youth-adult partnerships (YAPs) are key to a 4-H Camp teen leader's experience. These relationships form during training activities prior to camp, particularly with Extension Agents and key adult leaders involved in training. As teens return year after year, the relationships grow stronger. The connections are built upon mutual trust and respect and an equal partnership in many aspects of planning, preparing, and executing the camp program. The one area where this YAP is not one of true equality is that there is still a chain of command at camp where the adults and Agents are still in supervisory roles over the teen leaders, and there are limits on the types of situations teen leaders can resolve on their own.

Camp staff entered into these YAPs to some extent, but the relationships were not as robust as with the adults and Agents in the camping cluster, most likely because the groups have less opportunity to work together and bond before the camp week. This finding of strong YAPs is supported by Ramey et al. (2017), who linked involvement in YAPs with youth feeling more confident and empowered to contribute to their communities.

Contribution

The final theme of contribution has two subthemes, making an impact and generosity. The 4-H Camp teen leaders in this study love knowing they are making a positive impact in the lives of the campers with whom they work. It makes them feel good. They also like knowing that they are contributing to something bigger than themselves. They are giving to others, and that gives them a warm, fuzzy feeling.

Skill Building Prepares Youth to Give Back. Not only do youth find belonging and develop meaningful relationships at 4-H Camp, but they also develop skills and experience personal growth, much like that described by Garst et al. (2016) and Leff et al. (2015). Although not described in detail by the participants, each shared of being a counselor-in-training (CIT) at 4-H camp as they transitioned from being a camper to a 4-H Camp teen leader. This scaffolding of experience and skill building is also reflected in the 4-H frameworks (Arnold, 2018; Hendricks, 1998; Hershberg et al., 2015; Lile et al., 2021; Norman & Jordan, 2006/2018; White et al., 2018).

4-H Thriving. Mariano and Going (2011) identified that a major belief of PYD is that youth will adopt thriving trajectories that will lead them to think beyond themselves and contribute to their communities. Findings from this study reveal that 4-H Camp teen leaders are making contributions within the 4-H Camping program and in other areas of their lives. They

embody the sixth C of contribution within the Five Cs Model of PYD (Geldhof et al., 2015). The 4-H Thriving model describes the elements within a high-quality 4-H program that help youth thrive and thus achieve key developmental outcomes such as contributing to others (Arnold & Gagnon, 2020). For this study, 4-H Camp provides the developmental context and within it, as described by participants, are the elements that make up effective developmental contexts: sparks, belonging, relationships, and engagement (Arnold & Gagnon, 2019). For the youth in this study, the camp context provided opportunities to develop and hone a growing complement of skills, a safe place to belong and be accepted, meaningful connections with others, and opportunities to be an integral part of camp leadership.

Volunteerism. 4-H Camp teen leaders serve their camp community and their larger communities. They have reached a stage where they are ready and able to contribute (Atkins & Harmon, 2016; Fuligini, 2019), and they volunteer at 4-H Camp because it is dear to them. They enjoy what they do and recognize the importance of the roles they fill. Volunteering as 4-H Camp teen leaders makes them feel good. It makes them feel that they are leaving a lasting impact and making a difference in the lives of younger youth. As 4-H Camp teen leaders, they receive satisfaction from their leadership roles of helping others have positive camp experiences. These concepts connect to research by Worker et al. (2019), where they posited that the very act of contributing further develops the characteristics that position a person to feel ready and able to meaningfully volunteer.

Implications for Practice

This study provides an understanding of the lived experiences that motivate teenagers to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. The stories told by the teen participants and the findings resulting from data analysis provide a potential roadmap for 4-H professionals at the

county/city level and 4-H Camping professionals at the 4-H Centers or the state level. This roadmap may be useful in grooming future 4-H Camp teen leaders, attracting them to the role, and retaining these leaders.

Implications for 4-H Professionals

Growing strong 4-H Camp teen leaders from within appears to be influenced heavily by experiences when youth are campers. The quality of the teen leaders and their relationships with the campers they supervise makes a lasting impact on the campers. The teens in this study each reported experiences as campers that influenced their decisions to become 4-H Camp teen leaders. With this in mind, 4-H Agents and other 4-H professionals should pay special attention to ensuring that training is conducted properly and that all aspects of positive youth development (PYD) are emphasized. A significant component of PYD is fostering a sense of belonging through creating a welcoming environment (Wahle et al., 2019; White et al., 2018), which seems to be a critical piece in the camper and teen leader experience. Another component as it pertains to 4-H Camp is helping older campers become confident in their leadership skills by scaffolding the leadership experience (Arnold, 2017; Cantor et al., 2021) from camper to teen leader with a CIT year bridging the gap. This scaffolding may be necessary for teens to build confidence as they grow their skills. This step prepares the youth to step into the role of teen leader as a natural progression in their overall 4-H Camp experience.

Giving teenagers more and more autonomy and engaging them in YAPs may also be critical in attracting and retaining 4-H Camp teen leaders. Bringing 4-H Camp teen leaders and prospective 4-H Camp teen leaders into a true YAP where they are given equal voice, and decision-making abilities is important in helping them experience more autonomy (Lile et al., 2021) and can occur over time with youth gaining more and more responsibility as they mature

and gain experience (Cantor et al., 2021). Creating these strong YAPs prior to the camp week through regular training opportunities, leadership retreats, fun gatherings, and other such opportunities can help forge strong working relationships.

Implications for 4-H Camp Professionals

Camping contexts that promote opportunities for youth to develop meaningful relationships appear to be essential for sustained involvement in the program. Therefore, creating a context that fosters building these relationships is important. Other aspects of PYD come to the forefront as essential contextual components as well. Camp staff can do their part to ensure a safe, caring environment. They can provide age-appropriate opportunities for both campers and teens for skill building, especially helping youth develop leadership skills, decision-making skills, and autonomy.

In this study, camp staff were included in the YAP design but were on the fringe. Finding a way to tighten that relationship between camp staff and volunteers coming for one week of the summer may help facilitate a stronger working relationship and deepen the draw for returning in successive summers. It may also foster a more welcoming environment from a PYD perspective, one where everyone participating feels like family.

Theoretical and Empirical Implications

The theoretical and empirical implications of the findings are covered in this section. Findings aligned with the dual theories upon which this study is framed. The findings also aligned with much of the literature tangential to the topic, but not all of it.

Theoretical Implications

The dual frameworks of Lerner and Overton's relational developmental systems theory (Lerner, Johnson, et al., 2015) and Deci and Ryan's (2000) self-determination theory informed

this study. They guided the formation of the central research question and the three sub-questions. Both theories also served as a backdrop for analyzing data and determining findings. The findings in this study support the concept of RDST's bidirectional relationship between individuals and their context and SDT's basis of motivation grounded in internal and external factors connected to competence, relatedness, and autonomy.

Relational Developmental Systems. Relational developmental systems theory (RDST) focuses on the bidirectional relationship between individuals and their context. 4-H Camp becomes the context under consideration in this study, and as such, strongly influences the shaping of the individual as both a camper and a teen leader. Positive youth development (PYD) provides the basis for 4-H programming, including 4-H camping. It is firmly seated within RDST (Lerner, Lerner, et al., 2015) and provides the structure for a context where youth can experience positive growth. This PYD context was evident in the experiences shared by participants. They described a place where they belonged, both as campers previously and as teen leaders currently. They shared of meaningful relationships with campers, teens, adults, and to some extent, camp staff. They revealed skills they had developed and honed over time. They also spoke of true youth-adult partnerships (YAPs) where they felt mutual trust and respect and were valued members of the leadership team with equal voices in most regards, but still recognizing where they fell in the chain of command at camp. The context they describe is one where they have an opportunity to thrive. According to RDST, context is only one piece of the puzzle. The youth, themselves, have an equally important role to play in shaping their outcomes as they interact within this context. The rich descriptions provided by teens in this study about how, when they were campers, their teen leaders cared for them and helped them have positive experiences demonstrate the link between context and individual. Their choices after these interactions also

impacted their feelings and attitudes towards 4-H Camp and future camp leadership.

Self-Determination Theory. Self-determination theory (SDT) examines human behavior and development with particular attention to internal and external factors; the internal factors are based on competence, relatedness, and autonomy (Deci & Ryan, 2004; Ryan & Deci, 2017; Ryan & Deci, 2020). The teens in this study shared their personal experiences that led them to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. These experiences dovetail nicely with opportunities to build and hone skills, develop meaningful relationships with others, and experience independence as they became part of youth-adult partnerships within 4-H camp leadership. Their experiences at 4-H Camp become part of their identity. This concept aligns with research by McClatchey et al. (2021), who detailed how experience as campers contribute to identity formation and may influence decisions to volunteer in leadership roles for that same camp in the future.

Combining RDST and SDT. Strong, meaningful relationships are found within both RDST and SDT and are a significant factor in this study. The participants offered comment after comment about the connections, bonds, and relationships forged at 4-H Camp. These relationships are a critical component of PYD (Bowers et al., 2015). When the relationships are part of a YAP where youth are fully supported and encouraged, such as the relationships described by the teen participants, youth may be more likely to experience a shift in motivation from simply having a desire to do something to actually doing it (Nordstrom et al., 2022). This concept is similarly supported by research by Hershberg et al. (2015) that being engaged with caring and supportive adults helped promote youth contribution. Volunteering or contributing is a part of PYD (Geldhof et al., 2015) and is one avenue in a teen's transition to adulthood (Mateiu-Vescan et al., 2021) as they seek to give back and feel that they are part of something

bigger than themselves (Arnold, 2018; Malin et al., 2017).

Empirical Implications

This study fills a gap in the literature related to the motivation behind why teenagers volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. Findings support prior research tangential to this topic regarding positive youth development and a teenager's readiness to contribute and the influence of 4-H Camp teen leaders. However, the findings did not align with the literature regarding primary motivations for teens to volunteer.

Positive Youth Development and Contribution. Positive youth development is an approach to putting youth on a positive trajectory by building upon a young person's strengths or potential strengths (Ciocanel et al., 2017; Moore, 2017). The findings show that the teens in this study experienced PYD within the context of 4-H Camp, both as campers and in their current role as 4-H Camp teen leaders. For many, the seed for becoming a teen leader was planted when they were a camper. It took root, and through added PYD experiences over time, the desire grew, and their motivation to be 4-H Camp teen leaders blossomed as they made it a reality. Arnold and Gagnon (2019) and Roth and Brooks-Gunn (2016) emphasized the need to understand how the PYD context influences outcomes. The context described by these teens was one of belonging, where they are welcomed and accepted for who they are. The campers and teens receive independence, support, and an opportunity to build and hone various skills. The 4-H Camp teen leaders experience YAPs where they can positively influence campers in their care and help shape the campers' experiences at 4-H Camp. Above all, the teens describe a context where they can develop meaningful relationships with people of other ages and roles at 4-H Camp. The findings show that these elements of the camping context play a significant role in the teens volunteering to come back as 4-H Camp teen leaders. These findings also support the

literature indicating that the bonds formed and the personal growth experienced at camp (Garst et al., 2016; Leff et al., 2015) promote skills and have the potential to influence future contribution (Mainieri & Anderson, 2015).

The Influence of 4-H Camp Teen Leaders. The findings from this study reinforce the importance of 4-H Camp teen leaders as caring and supportive role models for campers and support the literature describing the social and emotional support teens provide to campers and each other (Epley et al., 2017). Even when pushed outside their comfort zones, and perhaps because of it, the teens step up to help support and guide their campers (Femrite & Flat, 2016). Findings show these teens want to impact their campers positively and that they enjoy the feeling they get from making a difference.

Motivation for Teens to Volunteer as 4-H Camp Teen Leaders. The evidence for the factors motivating the young people in this study to volunteer differs from the research on why most teens tend to volunteer. Malin et al. (2015) found that many teenagers volunteer because a peer or an adult asked them. However, the teens in this study sought out the volunteer experience for other reasons. They looked forward to the time when they could become a teen leader and eagerly applied when the opportunity became available. Another reason cited in the literature for why teens volunteer is to obtain volunteer hours before graduation, partially due to the benefits of being able to record volunteer experience on college or job applications (Bode, 2017; Malin et al., 2017). Only three participants in this study (Mark, Mary, & Susan) mentioned these benefits, and all three stressed that it was not their primary reason for volunteering but was more of an added perk. These teens volunteered because of their ties with 4-H Camp experiences and the people involved. 4-H Camp is a comfortable place, a community, a family - that allows them to be their authentic selves, learn, and grow. They develop meaningful relationships at 4-H Camp

and cultivate a desire to give back. This desire to contribute links back to teens wanting to give back (Lawford & Ramey, 2017) by being caring teen leaders for the campers they lead.

Limitations and Delimitations

Limitations in research refer to potential weaknesses in the study (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Delimitations are the boundaries imposed by the researcher (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Both could influence the data collected and, therefore, the findings. This section identifies the limitations and delimitations of this study.

Limitations

I made every effort to follow approved methods to understand the phenomenon under study and maintain trustworthiness. However, as with all qualitative data, there are things the researcher cannot control that may influence the findings (Creswell & Poth, 2018; Patton, 2002). I collected data for this study in the summer of 2022 after a COVID shutdown in 2020, when there was no 4-H Camp in Virginia, and a COVID recovery year in 2021, when camps were limited to 50 percent occupancy, which included only bringing 50 percent of the teen leaders. Since the teens in this study needed to be in at least their second year of leadership and since they definitely missed one and, in some cases, two years of teen leader eligibility, that meant that the teens interviewed tended to be older, although not exclusively so. This added level of maturity may have influenced their responses and observed actions. Additionally, the theme of connections and relationships was pervasive throughout the study. Since this was the first "normal" 4-H Camping year following the forced isolation of COVID, there is the possibility that connections and relationships now play a more critical role in the lives of these youth than they would have just three years ago.

Participants in this study were referred by their Extension Agents as meeting the

qualifications and having an interest in participating. I selected certain weeks to visit the 4-H Centers based on my availability, scheduling around my own summer residential and day camps and also factoring in travel. I provided the Agents who were camping that week with the eligibility qualifications for study participation. I asked them to select two to three teen leaders who met those qualifications and refer them to me. It is possible that the screening used by the 4-H Extension Agents may have influenced who participated and, therefore, the data collected.

The study called for six to eight focus group participants. Six teens responded, affirming their participation. One teen canceled at the last minute and then failed to attend the rescheduled session. Ultimately only five were part of that method of data collection. Several extra attempts were made to involve more participants beyond those who originally responded, but with many things vying for their attention, no additional study participants could join in. Since five participants was an acceptable number, the data were included for analysis. Had there been more participants, however, there may have been more discussion with participants building upon one another's answers and generating additional data.

Delimitations

Participant criteria and geographical representation were limits I imposed on this study. Each participant was a seasoned 4-H Camp teen leader in, at minimum, their second year of teen leadership at 4-H Camp. This requirement was necessary because one of the research questions involved experiences that caused the participants to want to return after their first year of leadership. It also gave the teens added experience in answering the question about the perceived benefits of being a 4-H Camp teen leader.

Although not a critical component of the study, I recruited at least two teen leaders from each 4-H Center to ensure participation from each of Virginia's six 4-H Educational Centers.

The geographical representation gave a better picture of the experiences reflective of the Virginia 4-H Camping program as a whole.

Recommendations for Future Research

This study filled a gap in the literature about the lived experiences that motivate teenagers to become 4-H Camp teen leaders. Although not a consideration for selecting study participants, every teen involved in the study had attended 4-H Camp previously as a camper. It would be interesting to conduct similar research with 4-H Camp teen leaders who had not previously participated in the camper role to determine what experiences led them to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. This future research could be a stand-alone study or a study comparing and contrasting the experiences motivating the two groups, previous camper and not. Another line of inquiry could involve following up with previous campers who have reached the eligibility age for 4-H Camp teen leadership but have decided not to pursue that opportunity. I recommend further study in Virginia and other states to examine in more depth the experiences that lead teenagers to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. Since these experiences require in-depth, rich descriptions, I recommend following the phenomenological approach for future studies to expand upon this research.

One additional area of exploration connects to 4-H Camp as a developmental context for youth thriving. Although not the focus of this research, much of the data included thriving indicators. There is potential for significant discovery in connecting the 4-H Camp developmental context to 4-H Thriving.

Conclusion

The purpose of this phenomenological study was to describe the lived experiences that motivate teenagers to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. The study arose from the

identified problem of not understanding why teenagers volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. With research surrounding teen leadership at 4-H Camp and identifying areas that lead to teen motivation, there was an identified gap in the literature surrounding teen motivation to serve in a volunteer leadership role at 4-H Camp.

The dual theories of relational developmental systems theory (Lerner, Johnson, et al., 2015) and self-determination theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) served as the study framework and the lens through which the data was interpreted. Data collection methods included interviews, observations, and focus groups. Sixteen 4-H Camp teen leaders made up the purposive sample, with representation from each of Virginia's six 4-H Educational Centers. I collected rich descriptions to help improve, although not guarantee, transferability. Interviews and observations took place during each participant's week of 4-H Camp, with focus groups at the summer's end. Member checks and triangulation helped increase credibility. I maintained dependability and confirmability audit trails to convey the study's trustworthiness. As with all transcendental phenomenological research, I also engaged in epoché (Moustakas, 1994) to bracket my biases and assumptions to approach the data with a fresh perspective.

I identified three main themes in the findings regarding what experiences motivate teenagers to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders. The first is the 4-H Camp culture itself with the close relationships formed there, the personal growth experienced, and the way camp helps shape a young person's identity. The second is the deep connection with others with subthemes of caring teen leaders, positive role models, and youth-adult partnerships. The third is the idea of contribution, encompassing making an impact and generosity. These findings have implications for 4-H professionals and 4-H Camping professionals. Opportunities for further study include learning more about 4-H Camp teen leaders who were never 4-H Campers previously, exploring

why some campers never take the next step of 4-H Camp teen leadership and learning more

about the linkages between the context of 4-H Camp and 4-H Thriving.

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National Academies of Sciences, Engineer (Washington, District of Columbia), Health

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National Academies of Sciences, Engineering, and Medicine, Board on Children, Youth,

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APPENDICES

Appendix A

Figures of Frameworks/Models Commonly Used in 4-H

Figure 2

The 5Cs Model of Positive Youth Development within the context of RDST
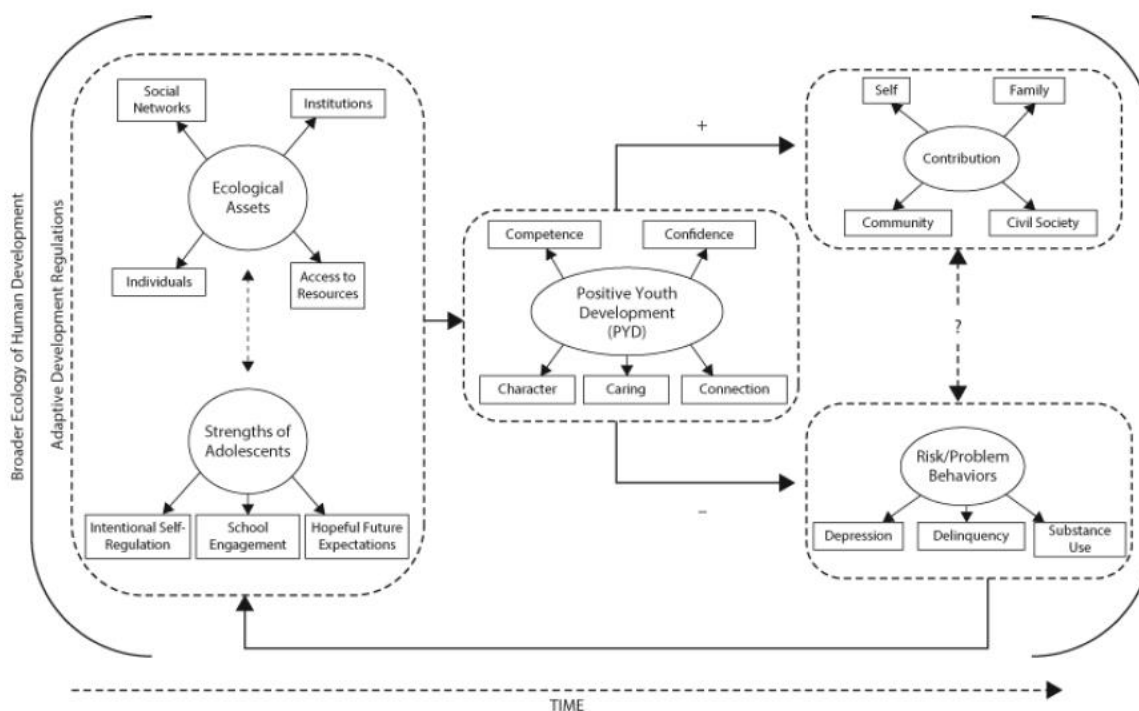
Note: The 5Cs Model of PYD illustrates the interconnection between the individual, his or her environment, and the various components of PYD that lead to the sixth C of contribution as well as to reduced risk behavior. This image also illustrates how the outcomes continue to influence the individual in a continual loop of human development. Image from Lerner, Lerner, et al. (2015).

Figure 3

The Essential Elements of 4-H
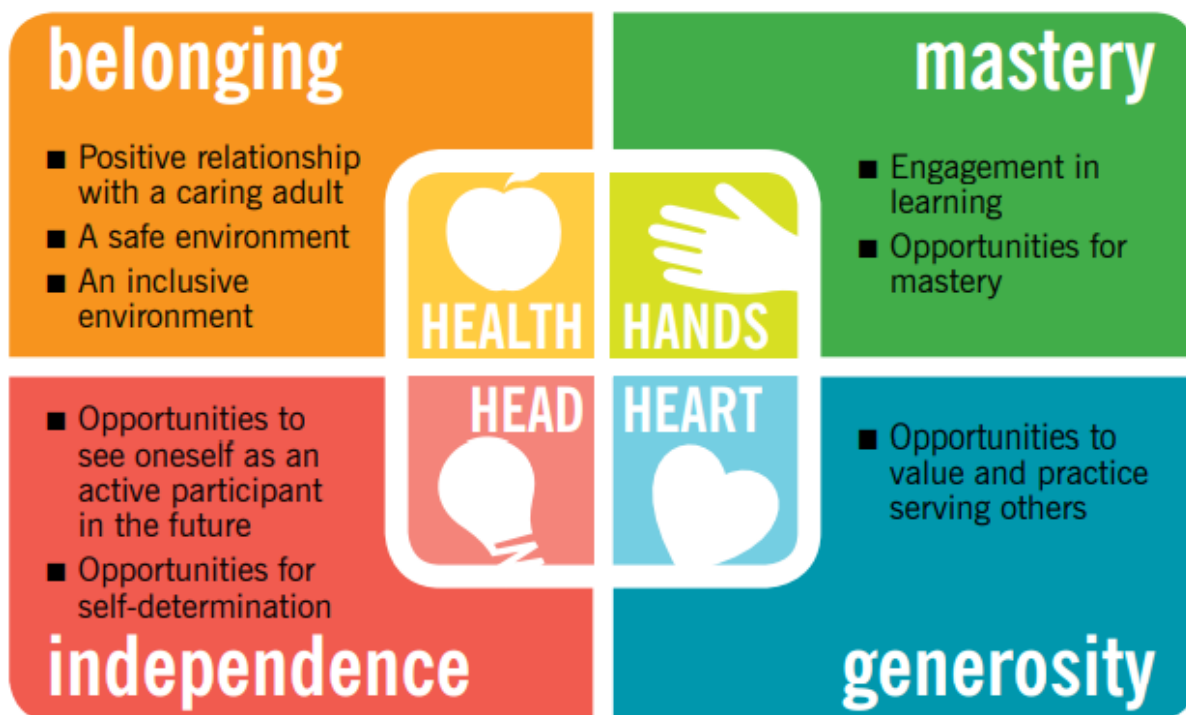
Note. The eight Essential Elements of 4-H are condensed into four broad groupings. Image from

Scott and Krinke (2018). Image used with permission from NDSU Extension.

Figure 4

The Targeting Life Skills model

Note: This figure depicts the life skills targeted in 4-H and groups them into eight subcategories

that correspond to the Head, Heart, Hands, and Health of 4-H. Image from Hendricks (1998).

Reprinted with permission from Iowa State University Extension and Outreach.

Figure 5

The 4-H Thriving Model
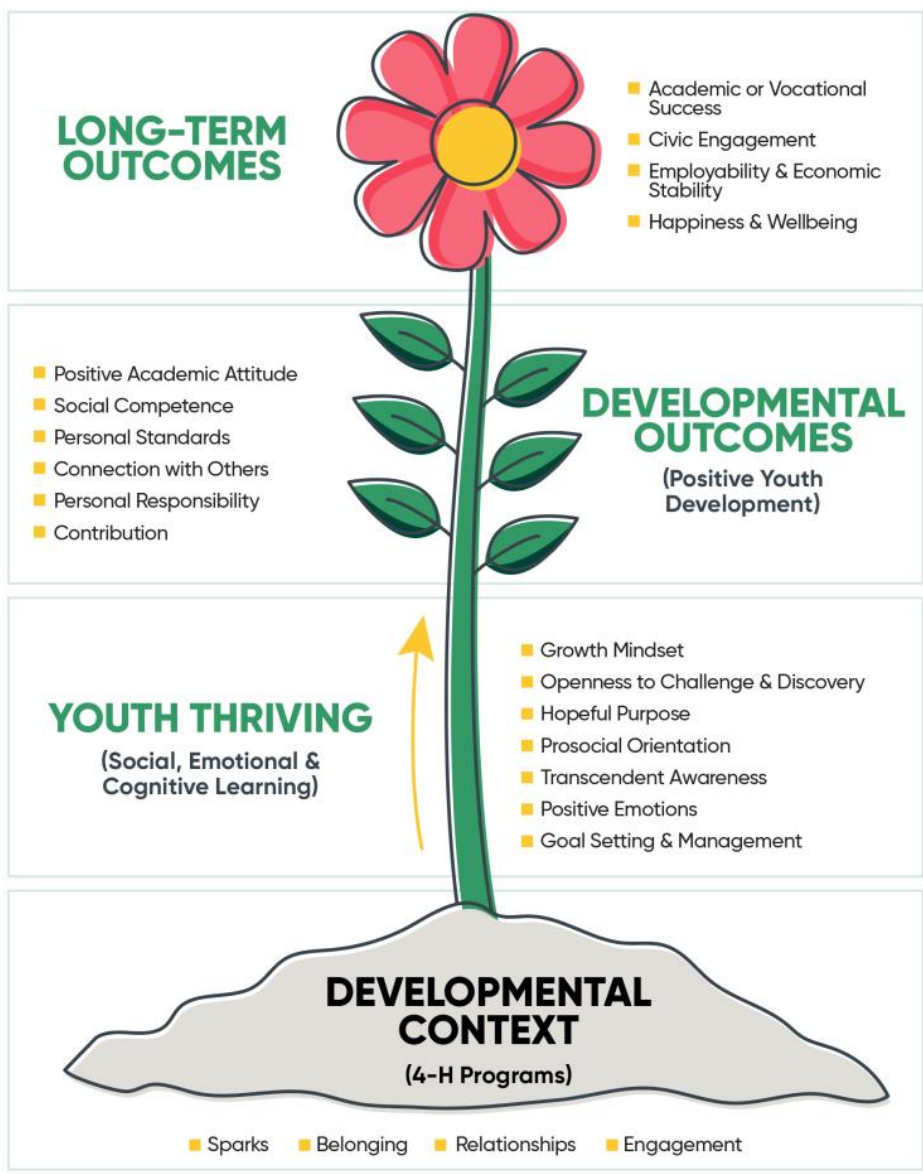
The 4-H Thriving Model
© 2021 National 4-H Council
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Note: The 4-H Thriving model depicts how the developmental context of 4-H supports youth

thriving which leads to positive youth development for the short- and long-term. Image from

Extension Foundation (2021).

Appendix B

IRB Approvals

LIBERTY UNIVERSITY.
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

March 30, 2022

Ruth Wallace
Terrell Elam

Re: IRB Approval - IRB-FY21-22-510 A PHENOMENOLOGICAL STUDY OF THE LIVED EXPERIENCES THAT MOTIVATE YOUNG PEOPLE TO VOLUNTEER AS 4-H CAMP TEEN LEADERS

Dear Ruth Wallace, Terrell Elam,

We are pleased to inform you that your study has been approved by the Liberty University Institutional Review Board (IRB). This approval is extended to you for one year from the following date: March 30, 2022. If you need to make changes to the methodology as it pertains to human subjects, you must submit a modification to the IRB. Modifications can be completed through your Cayuse IRB account.

Your study falls under the expedited review category (45 CFR 46.110), which is applicable to specific, minimal risk studies and minor changes to approved studies for the following reason(s):

7. Research on individual or group characteristics or behavior (including, but not limited to, research on perception, cognition, motivation, identity, language, communication, cultural beliefs or practices, and social behavior) or research employing survey, interview, oral history, focus group, program evaluation, human factors evaluation, or quality assurance methodologies.

Your stamped consent form(s) and final versions of your study documents can be found under the Attachments tab within the Submission Details section of your study on Cayuse IRB. Your stamped consent form(s) should be copied and used to gain the consent of your research participants. If you plan to provide your consent information electronically, the contents of the attached consent document(s) should be made available without alteration.

Thank you for your cooperation with the IRB, and we wish you well with your research project.

Sincerely,

G. Michele Baker, MA, CIP
Administrative Chair of Institutional Research
Research Ethics Office

VT | RESEARCH AND INNOVATION
SCHOLARLY INTEGRITY AND
RESEARCH COMPLIANCE
VIRGINIA TECH

Human Research Protection Program

IRB Authorization Agreement

Name of Institution or Organization Providing IRB Review (Institution A): Liberty University
IRB Registration #: IRB00007258
Federal wide Assurance (FWA) #, if any: FWA00016439

Name of Institution Relying on the Designated IRB (Institution B): Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University
OHRP Federal wide Assurance (FWA) #: FWA00000572

The Officials signing below agree that Institution B may rely on the designated IRB for review and continuing oversight of its human subject research described below: (choose one)
(___) This agreement applies to all human subject research covered by Institution B's FWA.
(_x_) This agreement is limited to the following specific protocol(s):
Name of Research Project: A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences that Motivate Young People to volunteer as 4-H Camp Teen Leaders

Name of (Institution A) Principal Investigator: Ruth Wallace
(Institution A) IRB Study Number: IRB-FY21-22-510

Name of Virginia Tech Principal Investigator: Ruth Wallace
VT IRB Study Number: n/a

Sponsor or Funding Agency, if any: n/a
Award Number, if any: n/a

(___) Other (describe):
The Reviewing Institution's IRB agrees to the following in regard to the above listed research protocol or activities:
I.   Provide initial and continuing review in accordance with 45 CFR 46 and its FWA.
II.   Arrange for prompt reporting to the Relying Institution's IRB of any of the following, as defined and determined by the Reviewing Institution's IRB:
    a.   Any unanticipated events or problems involving risks to subjects or others.
    b.   Any serious or continuing non-compliance.
    c.   Any suspension or termination of IRB approval.
III. Comply with all applicable Federal, State, and Local laws and regulations.
IV.   IRB meeting minutes will be made available to the Relying Institution's IRB upon request.
V.   Copy the Relying Institution on all correspondence to regulatory agencies if reporting of an event is required.

The Relying Institution remains responsible for the following:
I.   Ensure research activities at its site are in compliance with the IRB's determinations and with the terms of its OHRP-approved Assurance.

Appendix C

Permissions and Approvals

Permission from Jeremy Johnson, State 4-H Program Leader, Virginia

VirginiaTech
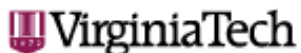
Virginia Cooperative Extension
Jeremy Johnson, M.Ed.
Assistant Director and State 4-H Leader
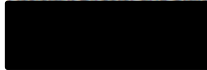
December 1, 2021

Ruth Wallace
Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development, Buckingham
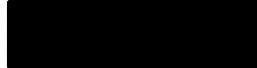
Dear Ruth:

After careful review of your research proposal entitled *A Transcendental Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences that Motivate Young People to Volunteer as 4-H Camp Teen Leaders*, I have decided to grant you permission to conduct your study at each of our six Virginia 4-H Educational Centers with agreement of each Center and camping cluster involved.

☒ I grant permission for Ruth Wallace to contact, with the help of their respective 4-H Agents, 4-H Camp teen leaders to invite them to participate in her research study.

☒ I grant permission for Ruth Wallace to contact the six Virginia 4-H Educational Centers and 4-H Camping Clusters to arrange for visits when interviews and observations can take place.

☒ I grant permission for Ruth Wallace to field test interview and focus group questions with 4-H Camp teen leaders who will not be participating in the research study.

Sincerely,

Jeremy C. Johnson, M.Ed.
Assistant Director and State 4-H leader

Invent the Future

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Site Approval Request

Permission from ██████ 4-H Educational Center

From:	██████
To:	Wallace, Ruth
Subject:	RE: permission needed for 4-H research at your Center this summer
Date:	Wednesday, December 1, 2021 3:08:13 PM

Ruth,

FYI – Trevor is gone and I am currently serving as the go between in that capacity – you absolutely have permission to visit. Just let me know when you want to come.

Sam

From: Wallace, Ruth
Sent: Wednesday, December 1, 2021 3:03 PM

██

Subject: permission needed for 4-H research at your Center this summer

As the 4-H Agent in Buckingham County, Virginia, and a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am researching teen motivation to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders as part of a doctoral degree requirement. The title of my research project is *A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences that Motivate Young People to Volunteer as 4-H Camp Teen Leaders.* **The purpose is to understand better why teens volunteer to be 4-H Camp teen leaders.**

I am writing to secure permission to be at your 4-H Center working with the 4-H Agents from the *as yet to be identified camping cluster* to interview and observe one to three 4-H Camp teen leaders. I will follow all of the above suspicion policies during the process. As part of the IRB approval process from Liberty University and Virginia Tech, I need a letter from you (or a reply to this email) giving permission. The response needs to state that I will be allowed to spend a day or two at your facility this summer working with the 4-H Agents to conduct teen interviews and observations (pending IRB approval). I have already secured permission from Dr. Jeremy Johnson to conduct the research with Virginia 4-H Teens. I will be working with the Agents to determine when the teens can be available for individual interviews, which will last approximately one hour each. I will also be observing them throughout the day.

Participants and their parents/guardians will be presented with combined consent/assent information before participating. Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please respond by email to ██████████████ We will identify the details of the visit for summer 2022 in the spring.

Thanks,

Permission from ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ 4-H Educational Center

From: ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮
To: Wallace, Ruth
Subject: Re: permission needed for 4-H research at your Center this summer
Date: Wednesday, December 1, 2021 3:16:39 PM

Hello Ruth,

Yes, you have permission to spend a day or two at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ this upcoming summer to work with agents and Teens for your research. Let me know if I can be of any help during it!

On Wed, Dec 1, 2021 at 3:03 PM Wallace, Ruth ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ wrote:

> As the 4-H Agent in Buckingham County, Virginia, and a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am researching teen motivation to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders as part of a doctoral degree requirement. The title of my research project is *A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences that Motivate Young People to Volunteer as 4-H Camp Teen Leaders*. **The purpose is to understand better why teens volunteer to be 4-H Camp teen leaders.**
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>
> Thanks,

Permission from ████████ 4-H Educational Center

Wallace, Ruth

From: ████████
Sent: Thursday, December 9, 2021 10:11 AM
To: Wallace, Ruth
Subject: FW: permission needed for 4-H research at your Center this summer

Hello Ruth,
You are very welcome to visit with us at ████ as part of this project.
Please let me know how I can assist in any way.

Sue Williams
Center Director
████████████████
███████

████████████████
████████████████
████████

Subject: FW: permission needed for 4-H research at your Center this summer

Hi! I'm following up on my email from last week about getting permission to conduct research at your 4-H center for a day or two of 4-H Camp next summer. I need a letter from you (a reply to this email is sufficient) granting permission so that I can include it in my submission to the institutional review board (IRB). Please include the name of your 4-H Center in your reply. I will be working with specific (and as of yet unidentified) 4-H Agents to visit during their week of camp to interview and observe a couple of 4-H Camp teen leaders.

If you have any questions about the study, I'm happy to talk with you more about it. Thank you.

From: Wallace, Ruth
Sent: Wednesday, December 1, 2021 3:03 PM
████████████████████
████████████████████

Subject: permission needed for 4-H research at your Center this summer

As the 4-H Agent in Buckingham County, Virginia, and a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am researching teen motivation to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders as part of a doctoral degree requirement. The title of my research project is *A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences that Motivate Young People to Volunteer as 4-H Camp Teen Leaders*. **The purpose is to understand better why teens volunteer to be 4-H Camp teen leaders.**

I am writing to secure permission to be at your 4-H Center working with the 4-H Agents from the *as yet to be identified camping cluster* to interview and observe one to three 4-H Camp teen leaders. I will follow all of the above suspicion policies during the process. As part of the IRB approval process from Liberty University and Virginia Tech, I need a letter from you (or a reply to this email) giving permission. The response needs to state that I will be allowed to spend a day or two at your facility this summer working with the 4-H Agents to conduct teen interviews and observations (pending IRB

Permission from ██████████████████ 4-H Educational Center

From: ██████
To: wallace, ruth
Cc: ██████
Subject: Re: permission needed for 4-H research at your Center this summer
Date: Thursday, December 2, 2021 9:23:55 AM

Good Morning Ruth,

I checked in with a sampling of my Agents and they are on board with your request. Therefore you have our permission here at ██████████ to spend a day or two this summer working with the 4-H Agents to conduct teen interviews and observations (pending IRB approval). Please let me know if you need anything further while we await the planning process.

Thank you,

██████

On Wed, Dec 1, 2021 at 3:03 PM Wallace, Ruth ██████████ wrote:

As the 4-H Agent in Buckingham County, Virginia, and a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am researching teen motivation to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders as part of a doctoral degree requirement. The title of my research project is *A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences that Motivate Young People to Volunteer as 4-H Camp Teen Leaders.* **The purpose is to understand better why teens volunteer to be 4-H Camp teen leaders.**

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Participants and their parents/guardians will be presented with combined consent/assent information before participating. Taking part in this study is entirely voluntary, and participants are welcome to discontinue participation at any time.

Thank you for considering my request. If you choose to grant permission, please respond by email to ██████████ We will identify the details of the visit for summer 2022 in the spring.

Permission from ███████████ 4-H Educational Center

Wallace, Ruth

From:	███████████
Sent:	Thursday, December 2, 2021 8:51 AM
To:	Wallace, Ruth
Subject:	RE: permission needed for 4-H research at your Center this summer

Ruth,

What an awesome study!

The ███████████ would be happy to allow you whatever time you need at our facility working with 4-H agents and teens in summer 2022. I look forward to working out details with you. Have a wonderful day!

Sincerely,

███████████

███████████
Program Director

███████████

From: Wallace, Ruth
Sent: Wednesday, December 1, 2021 3:03 PM
███████████

Subject: permission needed for 4-H research at your Center this summer

As the 4-H Agent in Buckingham County, Virginia, and a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am researching teen motivation to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders as part of a doctoral degree requirement. The title of my research project is *A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences that Motivate Young People to Volunteer as 4-H Camp Teen Leaders.* **The purpose is to understand better why teens volunteer to be 4-H Camp teen leaders.**

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Permission from ███████████████ **4-H Educational Center**

Wallace, Ruth

From: ██████████████████████████

Sent: Friday, December 10, 2021 9:48 AM

To: Wallace, Ruth

Subject: Re: permission needed for 4-H research at your Center this summer

Hi Ruth,

Yes, the ██████████████████████ is happy to allow you to do your research here. As someone aspiring to get their doctorate, this research sounds awesome. I'd love to talk more just out of interest!

Somethings that we'd like to be sure are in place for the research are:

- To plan ahead of time what week based on our guidance
- Setting dates by the end of April
- Person(s) involved in research follow whatever covid protocols are in place for the 2022 summer

Please let me know if you have questions. Looking forward to it!

███████

--------- Forwarded message ---------

██
██
██
██

As the 4-H Agent in Buckingham County, Virginia, and a graduate student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am researching teen motivation to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders as part of a doctoral degree requirement. The title of my research project is *A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences that Motivate Young People to Volunteer as 4-H Camp Teen Leaders.* **The purpose is to understand better why teens volunteer to be 4-H Camp teen leaders.**

I am writing to secure permission to be at your 4-H Center working with the 4-H Agents from the *as yet to be identified camping cluster* to interview and observe one to three 4-H Camp teen leaders. I will follow all of the above suspicion policies during the process. As part of the IRB approval process from Liberty University and Virginia Tech, I need a letter from you (or a reply to this email) giving permission. The response needs to state that I will be allowed to spend a day or two at your facility this summer working with the 4-H Agents to conduct teen interviews and observations (pending IRB approval). I have already secured permission from Dr. Jeremy Johnson to conduct the research with Virginia 4-H Teens. I will be working with the Agents to determine when the teens can be available for individual interviews, which will last approximately one hour each. I will also be observing them throughout the day.

Appendix D

Recruitment Materials

Verbal Script to Camping Cluster 4-H Agents

Would you be willing to help me identify 4-H Camp teen leaders for a research study about their lived experiences that motivate them to be 4-H Camp teen leaders? I am working to complete my doctoral degree through the School of Education at Liberty University and would like your help in connecting me with some of your 4-H Camp teen leaders who may be willing to participate in the study. The purpose of my research is to learn why teens volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. I want to know more about their experiences that have motivated them to become and remain 4-H Camp teen leaders.

I have secured permission from the State 4-H Office and each 4-H Center to conduct this research. With your permission, I would like to visit your week of camp and while there, separately interview two to three teen leaders from your cluster and then observe them in action. I expect the interviews would take approximately one hour each, and I can work with you to find the best time to conduct them. Between the interviews and observations, I will likely be spending the entire day at camp and may even need to return the next day.

If you are willing for me to involve your teens in this study, I will need your help identifying potential research participants and connecting me with them and a parent or guardian. I am specifically interested in interviewing teens who meet three criteria: being active teen leaders in at least their second year of service, who have good oral communication skills, and are willing to talk to adults with whom they are not familiar. I may end up interviewing only two youth, but I would like to secure advance permissions from three youth in case some end up not coming to camp at the last minute or decide at camp that they prefer not to participate. Although not critical to the study, it would be nice if the participants represented a diverse group in terms of race and gender.

Would you be willing for me to involve your teens in this study?

If so, I will send you some recruitment materials that you can use in connecting teens to the study. Thank you.

Email Verbiage for 4-H Agents to Use in Notifying Teen Leaders of the Research Project

Dear 4-H Camp Teen Leader and their parent/guardian (if under 18):

One of my 4-H Agent friends, Ruth Wallace from Buckingham County, is conducting research to learn why teens volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. She needs your help. While we are at 4-H Camp this summer, she will be visiting to interview a few teens and observe them in action. **Would you be willing to be a research participant?** The interview would take approximately an hour out of your day at camp, and we would work together to find a good time for that to occur. Ms. Wallace will also be walking around camp making observations. Later this fall, a subset of the interview participants will also be invited to participate in a focus group (1.5 hours) by videoconference.

To find out more, please read the attached recruitment letter from Ms. Wallace. If you are willing to participate, there is a form that needs to be completed and returned before (insert date at least one month prior to camp week). If you are under 18, you will find a combined consent/assent form for both parent/guardian and 4-H teen to complete and return. If you are 18 or 19, only you will need to complete and return the consent form. Please return the document directly to her at ████████████████████████████████ You can also email her to find out more or call her at ████████ Thank you.

Participant Recruitment Letter

Dear 4-H Camp Teen Leader,

As a student in the School of Education at Liberty University, I am conducting research as part of the requirements for a doctoral degree. The purpose of my research is to learn why teens volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. I want to know more about their experiences that have motivated them to become and remain 4-H Camp teen leaders. I am writing to invite eligible participants to join my study.

Participants must be active 4-H teen leaders (ages 15-19) in at least their second year of service as leaders, who have good oral communication skills, and are willing to talk to adults with whom they are not familiar. Participants, if willing, will be asked to participate in an in-person, audio-recorded interview (1 hour) at 4-H Camp; review the interview transcript (20 minutes), which will be emailed to them; allow me to observe them in-person at 4-H Camp (2 hours) without recording; and possibly participate in an audio- and video-recorded focus group with 2-3 other participants (1.5 hours) via Zoom and review that transcript (30 minutes), which I will email to them. Names and other identifying information will be requested as part of this study, but the information will remain confidential.

To participate, please contact me at ███████████████ for more information.

A combined parental consent and youth assent document is attached to this email, along with an adult consent document. The consent documents contain additional information about my research. If you choose to participate and are under 18 years of age, you and your parent/guardian will need to sign the consent/assent document and return it to me at ███████████████ prior to the interview. If you choose to participate and are 18 years of age or older, you will need to sign the consent document and return it to me at ███████████████ prior to the interview.

We will schedule the interview and observation to take place during your week of 4-H Camp. Towards the end of the camping season, I will send a follow-up email inviting you to participate in one of two audio- and video-recorded focus groups via Zoom. The email will have a link where you can accept the invitation by selecting the date of the focus group that is best for you. You may also decline to participate in a focus group. A follow-up email will provide you with the Zoom link for the focus group you choose. During the focus group, participants will sign-in to Zoom using a pseudonym chosen during the interview, but even though participant names will not be listed, their faces will be visible.

Sincerely,

Ruth Wallace
Senior Extension Agent, 4-H, Buckingham County, Virginia
███████████████████████████████

Email Verbiage to Teens and Parents Confirming Willingness to Participate in the Study

Dear 4-H Camp Teen Leader and their parent/guardian (if under 18):

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed and for me to observe you at 4-H Camp for the study on why teens volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. I will be interviewing two to three teen leaders during your week of 4-H Camp. The interviews will be audio recorded for transcription and you will have an opportunity to review the transcriptions. These interviews, combined with observations made at camp and responses to focus group questioning later this fall, will help me better understand the experiences that motivate young people to be 4-H Camp teen leaders. I look forward to meeting you at (*name of 4-H Center*) the week of (*date*).

Ruth Wallace
Extension Agent, 4-H Development

Email Verbiage to Schedule Focus Group

Dear 4-H Camp Teen Leader and their parent/guardian (if under 18):

Thank you again for allowing me to interview you during 4-H Camp. I have a few follow-up questions that I would like to ask in a focus group setting via Zoom. The focus group should take approximately 1 ½ hours, and will be both audio and video recorded. Please RSVP at this link (provide survey link) to let me know your willingness and availability to participate in one of the two focus groups.

Ruth Wallace
Extension Agent, 4-H Development
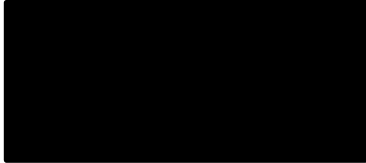
Email Verbiage to Teens and Parents Confirming Focus Group Participation

Dear 4-H Camp Teen Leader and their parent/guardian (if under 18):

Thank you for agreeing to be part of a focus group for the study on why teens volunteer

as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. The focus group you will be part of will take place on

(date) at *(time)*. Please use this link to sign on *(zoom link)*. Remember to change your name on

zoom to reflect the pseudonym you chose during your initial interview.

1. Click on participants.
2. Find your name and hover over it.
3. Select more and then rename.
4. Type in your pseudonym.
5. Make sure to uncheck the line that says "remember my name for future meetings."
6. Click ok.

Thanks again, and I'll see you soon during our focus group.

Ruth Wallace
Extension Agent, 4-H Development

Appendix E

Consent/Assent Documents

Combined Parental Consent and Youth Assent

Title of the Project: A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences that Motivate Young People to Volunteer as 4-H Camp Teen Leaders
Principal Investigator: Ruth Wallace, Senior Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development (Virginia Tech) and EdD Candidate (Liberty University)

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

Your teenager is invited to participate in a research study. Participants must be active 4-H teen leaders (ages 15-19) in at least their second year of service as leaders, who have good oral communication skills, and are willing to talk to adults with whom they are not familiar. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to allow your teen to take part in this research project.

What is the study about and why are we doing it?

The purpose of the study is to learn why teens volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. I want to know more about their experiences that have motivated them to become and remain 4-H Camp teen leaders. This may help 4-H Agents, adult volunteers, and camp staff as we work with young people. It may help in recruitment methods, may lead to a closer examination of experiences that promote future camp leadership, and may help to enhance teen leader experiences through improved 4-H programming and teen-adult partnerships.

What will participants be asked to do in this study?

If you agree to allow your teen to be in this study, I will ask him or her to do the following things:

1. Participate in an in-person interview during 4-H Camp that will last approximately one hour. It will be audio recorded for later transcription. The teen participant will be asked to review the transcript, which I will send by email, and notify me if there are concerns regarding the accuracy of the transcript.
2. Allow me to observe him or her, in-person, carrying out duties at camp, as well as during free time. The total observation time will be approximately two hours spread throughout the day. I will not be recording these observations but will be taking notes.
3. A smaller number of participants will be invited to be part of one of two focus groups in the fall of 2022. The focus groups will take place by teleconference and will last approximately 1½ hours. They will be recorded on the videoconference platform with both audio and video. The teen participants will be asked to review the transcript, which I will send by email, and notify me if there are concerns regarding the accuracy of the transcript.

How could participants or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include providing 4-H professionals and volunteers with information that will help them better understand the experiences that lead teens to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders and potentially enable them to adjust or enhance programming to better facilitate similar experiences.

What risks might participants experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks your teen would encounter in everyday life.

In my role as a 4-H Agent, I am a mandatory reporter. If your teen discloses information that triggers mandatory reporting requirements for child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others, as a mandatory reporter, I will notify Social Services.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

- Participant responses will be kept confidential through the use of pseudonyms.
- Data will be stored on a password-locked computer and may be used in future presentations. After three years, all electronic records will be deleted.
- Interviews and focus groups will be recorded and transcribed. Recordings will be stored on a password-locked computer for three years and then erased. Only the researcher will have access to these recordings.
- Confidentiality cannot be guaranteed in focus group settings. While discouraged, other members of the focus group may share what was discussed with persons outside of the group.

Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to allow your teen to participate will not affect your or his or her current or future relations with Liberty University or Virginia Tech. If you decide to allow your teen to participate, she or he is free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should be done if a participant wishes to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw your teen from the study or your teen chooses to withdraw, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw her or him or should your teen choose to withdraw, data collected from your teen, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your teen's contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw him or her or if your teen chooses to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Ruth Wallace. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at ████████████ and/or ████████████ You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Terrell Elam, at ████████████████

Whom do you contact if you have questions about rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to allow your teen to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to allow my teen to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio and video record my teen as part of his/her participation in this study.

_____

Printed Teen's Name

_____

Parent's Signature   Date

_____

Minor's Signature   Date

To help facilitate future communication, please provide the following:

_____

Parent/Guardian email

_____

Teen email if available (personal, not school)

Adult Consent

Title of the Project: A Phenomenological Study of the Lived Experiences that Motivate Young People to Volunteer as 4-H Camp Teen Leaders
Principal Investigator: Ruth Wallace, Senior Extension Agent, 4-H Youth Development (Virginia Tech) and EdD Candidate (Liberty University)

Invitation to be Part of a Research Study

You are invited to participate in a research study. To participate, you must be an active 4-H teen leader (ages 15-19) in at least your second year of service as a leader. You must also have good oral communication skills and be willing to talk to adults with whom you are not familiar. Taking part in this research project is voluntary.

Please take time to read this entire form and ask questions before deciding whether to take part in this research.

What is the study about and why is it being done?

The purpose of the study is to learn why teens volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders in Virginia. I want to know more about their experiences that have motivated them to become and remain 4-H Camp teen leaders. This may help 4-H Agents, adult volunteers, and camp staff as we work with young people. It may help in recruitment methods, may lead to a closer examination of experiences that promote future camp leadership, and may help to enhance teen leader experiences through improved 4-H programming and teen-adult partnerships.

What will happen if you take part in this study?

If you agree to be in this study, I will ask you to do the following things:

4. Participate in an in-person interview during 4-H Camp that will last approximately one hour. It will be audio recorded for later transcription. You will be asked to review the transcript, which I will send by email, and notify me if there are concerns regarding the accuracy of the transcript.

5. Allow me to observe you, in person, carrying out duties at camp, as well as during free time. The total observation time will be approximately two hours spread throughout the day. I will not be recording these observations but will be taking notes.

6. A smaller number of participants will be invited to be part of one of two focus groups in the fall of 2022. The focus groups will take place by teleconference and will last approximately 1½ hours. They will be recorded on the videoconference platform with both audio and video. You will be asked to review the transcript, which I will send by email, and notify me if there are concerns regarding the accuracy of the transcript.

How could you or others benefit from this study?

Participants should not expect to receive a direct benefit from taking part in this study.

Benefits to society include providing 4-H professionals and volunteers with information that will help them better understand the experiences that lead teens to volunteer as 4-H Camp teen leaders and potentially enable them to adjust or enhance programming to better facilitate similar experiences.

What risks might you experience from being in this study?

The risks involved in this study are minimal, which means they are equal to the risks you would encounter in everyday life.

In my role as a 4-H Agent, I am a mandatory reporter. If you disclose information that triggers mandatory reporting requirements for child abuse, child neglect, elder abuse, or intent to harm self or others, as a mandatory reporter, I will notify Social Services.

How will personal information be protected?

The records of this study will be kept private. Published reports will not include any information that will make it possible to identify a subject. Research records will be stored securely, and only the researcher will have access to the records.

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Is study participation voluntary?

Participation in this study is voluntary. Your decision whether to participate will not affect your current or future relations with Liberty University or Virginia Tech. If you decide to participate, you are free to not answer any question or withdraw at any time without affecting those relationships.

What should you do if you decide to withdraw from the study?

If you choose to withdraw from the study, please contact the researcher at the email address/phone number included in the next paragraph. Should you choose to withdraw, data collected from you, apart from focus group data, will be destroyed immediately and will not be included in this study. Focus group data will not be destroyed, but your contributions to the focus group will not be included in the study if you choose to withdraw.

Whom do you contact if you have questions or concerns about the study?

The researcher conducting this study is Ruth Wallace. You may ask any questions you have now. If you have questions later, **you are encouraged** to contact her at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ and/or ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮ You may also contact the researcher's faculty sponsor, Dr. Terrell Elam, at ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Whom do you contact if you have questions about your rights as a research participant?

If you have any questions or concerns regarding this study and would like to talk to someone other than the researcher, **you are encouraged** to contact the Institutional Review Board, 1971 University Blvd., Green Hall Ste. 2845, Lynchburg, VA 24515 or email at irb@liberty.edu.

Disclaimer: The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is tasked with ensuring that human subjects research will be conducted in an ethical manner as defined and required by federal regulations. The topics covered and viewpoints expressed or alluded to by student and faculty researchers are those of the researchers and do not necessarily reflect the official policies or positions of Liberty University.

Your Consent

By signing this document, you are agreeing to be in this study. Make sure you understand what the study is about before you sign. You will be given a copy of this document for your records. The researcher will keep a copy with the study records. If you have any questions about the study after you sign this document, you can contact the study team using the information provided above.

I have read and understood the above information. I have asked questions and have received answers. I consent to participate in the study.

☐ The researcher has my permission to audio and video record me as part of my participation in this study.

_____
Printed Subject Name

_____
Signature & Date

Appendix F

Interview Protocol

Introduction – Read this text:

Welcome [Name]. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. I am interested in learning about your experiences that have led you to want to be a 4-H Camp teen leader. My questions today will focus on this topic. This interview will take approximately one hour to complete. I will be recording the interview so that I can transcribe and review the information later. Your name and any identifying information will not be included in the transcription. If a question makes you feel uncomfortable, or you don't want to answer, we can skip to another question and we can stop the interview at any time.

Do you have any questions about the interview?

Ok, let's get started:

Open-Ended Interview Questions

1. As we get started, I'd like to ask a few demographic questions (questions used to describe you):

   a. What is your gender?

   b. What are your race & ethnicity? (If needed: Ethnicity refers to belonging to a population group or subgroup made up of people who share a common cultural background or descent. Examples might be Hispanic or Latinx, Middle Eastern, or Romani, among others.)

   c. Please describe any experience you have had as a camper, either in 4-H or other overnight camps, and the number of years you attended, if any.

   d. Please describe any experience you have had as a 4-H Camp Counselor in Training (CIT) or similar position at 4-H Camp or other overnight camps and the number of years you were in this training position, if any.

   e. How many years have you been a 4-H Camp teen leader?

2. Tell me how 4-H Camp is going for you this week.

3. What is your favorite thing about 4-H Camp?

4. How has this favorite thing changed over time from when you were a camper to now?

5. Think back to your first year as a 4-H Camp teen leader. Why did you sign up to be a teen leader?

6. What experiences did you have as a camper or CIT that influenced your decision to be a teen leader?

   a. How did these things make you feel?

   b. How do you describe the camp community/ camp culture?

   c. How do you think the choices you made at camp or the opportunities available at camp influenced your camp experiences?

7. What experiences outside of camp (maybe at school, home, sports, or hanging out with friends) influenced your decision to be a 4-H Camp teen leader?

   a. How did these things make you feel?

   b. How do you describe the _____ community?

   c. How do you think the choices you made at camp or the opportunities available at camp influenced your camp experiences?

8. Describe your experiences as a 4-H Camp teen leader.

9. What do you think are the benefits of being a 4-H Camp teen leader?

   a. How do these benefits help you, personally?

   b. How do they benefit the camp community or other communities of which you are a part?

10. This is your _____ year as a 4-H Camp teen leader. Why did you volunteer to come back?

11. Please describe your thoughts about volunteerism. Why volunteer?

    a.   What other volunteer work are you involved in outside of 4-H, if any?

12. Thank you for your time. Is there anything else you think I should know about your

experiences that led you to volunteer as a 4-H Camp teen leader?

Appendix G

Observation Protocol for Lived Experiences That Motivate Teens to Volunteer as 4-H Camp Teen Leaders

Participant pseudonym:

Descriptive Notes	*Camper Interactions*	*Interacting with Other Leaders*	*Reflective Notes*
Assigned Duties: Classes			
Time Observed			
Physical Setting			
Social Setting			
Formal interactions:			
Informal Interactions:			
Observing What Does Not Happen:			
Other:			

Participant pseudonym:

Descriptive Notes	Camper Interactions	Interacting with Other Leaders	Reflective Notes
Assigned Duties: Line Up			
Time Observed			
Physical Setting			
Social Setting			
Formal interactions:			
Informal Interactions:			
Observing What Does Not Happen:			
Other:			

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Participant pseudonym:

Descriptive Notes	Camper Interactions	Interacting with Other Leaders	Reflective Notes
Assigned Duties: Meals			
Time Observed			
Physical Setting			
Social Setting			
Formal interactions:			
Informal Interactions:			
Observing What Does Not Happen:			
Other:			

Participant pseudonym:

Descriptive Notes	Camper Interactions	Interacting with Other Leaders	Reflective Notes
Assigned Duties: Recreation			
Time Observed			
Physical Setting			
Social Setting			
Formal interactions:			
Informal Interactions:			
Observing What Does Not Happen:			
Other:			

Participant pseudonym:

Descriptive Notes	Camper Interactions	Interacting with Other Leaders	Reflective Notes
Assigned Duties: Free Time			
Time Observed			
Physical Setting			
Social Setting			
Formal interactions:			
Informal Interactions:			
Observing What Does Not Happen:			
Other:			

Participant pseudonym:

Descriptive Notes	Camper Interactions	Interacting with Other Leaders	Reflective Notes
Assigned Duties: Pack Meetings			
Time Observed			
Physical Setting			
Social Setting			
Formal interactions:			
Informal Interactions:			
Observing What Does Not Happen:			
Other:			

Participant pseudonym:

Descriptive Notes	Camper Interactions	Interacting with Other Leaders	Reflective Notes
Assigned Duties: Evening Programs			
Time Observed			
Physical Setting			
Social Setting			
Formal interactions:			
Informal Interactions:			
Observing What Does Not Happen:			
Other:			

Appendix H

Focus Group Protocol

Introduction – Read this text:

Welcome, everyone. Thank you for taking the time to talk with me today. This focus group is following up on the interviews and observations I conducted over the summer to learn about your experiences that motivate you to be 4-H Camp teen leader. As we go through the questions, I want everyone to feel comfortable answering. To make this process run smoothly, I'd like to suggest that we follow three basic rules:
1. Allow everyone the opportunity to speak for each question asked. That means that no one should be monopolizing the conversation.
2. We may have differing viewpoints. That is okay. We want to hear about everyone's experiences.
3. Please don't interrupt each other. Wait until the speaker finishes before you jump in.

We will be recording this focus group so we can transcribe and review the information later. Before we begin the recording, please change your name on the Zoom platform. (Provide instruction on how to do that). During this focus group, let's refer to each other by the names on the screen). Your real name will not be included on the recording or transcription. If you feel uncomfortable with a question, or have no answer, you do not have to answer it. If at any time, you want to end your participation in the focus group, you may do so.

If you will go ahead and open your chat box, I will copy and paste each question into the chat box as we come to it so that you can see it visually in addition to listening to it.

Do you have any questions before we begin?

Ok, let's get started: (Hit record)

Please take a moment to introduce yourself using your pseudonym displayed on the screen and share with us the 4-H Educational Center where you camp.

1. What do you enjoy about being a teen leader at 4-H Camp?

2. What isn't as enjoyable about the experience?

3. You've told me some good points and some less enjoyable points about being teen leaders.

   With the ups and downs, what is it that makes you want to sign up to be a 4-H Camp teen

   leader?

      a. Please share with me a specific experience that led you to want to be a 4-H Camp

teen leader.

    b.   What parts of that experience stand out the most to you?

4.   Tell me about the working relationships you have with the adult leaders and Extension

    Agents at camp or in preparing for camp?

    a.   Do you feel it is a true partnership where you are treated as equal partners?

    b.   What about your working relationships with the summer camp staff?

5.   How do you feel about the impact you make at 4-H Camp?

6.   What did you have to give up in order to be a 4-H Camp teen leader?

    a.   What kind of fee was there for you to come to camp as a teen leader?

    b.   What makes giving this up worth it?

7.   How were you invited to become a 4-H Camp teen leader?

8.   How has 4-H Camp impacted you?

9.   What else would you like for me to know about your experiences that motivate you to

    volunteer as a 4-H Camp teen leader?

Appendix I

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Figure 1. The Motivation Continuum (p. 39)

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Mon 3/6/2023 2:35 PM
To: Wallace, Ruth E ███████████████

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Hi Ruth,

On behalf of the Center for Self-Determination Theory, you have our permission to use the SDT taxomony of motivation figure for your dissertation.

Best wishes,
Shannon

Shannon Hoefen Cerasoli, MPA

Director, Center for Self-Determination Theory
w: www.selfdeterminationtheory.org

Figure 2. The 5Cs Model of Positive Youth Development within the context of RDST (p. 199)

Figure 3. The Essential Elements of 4-H (p. 200)

[External] RE: permission to publish Essential Elements of 4-H image in dissertation

Meagan Hoffman ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Mon 1/23/2023 11:20 AM

To: Wallace, Ruth ▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Hello Ruth!

Thanks for reaching out! Thank you for asking about this image. I am thrilled to know that others outside of NDSU have used this publication! You can use the image in your dissertation, I just ask that you give us (NDSU Extension) credit.

Yay for finishing your PhD! I know it is quite the process! Lol! I hope it all goes great as you finish up!

Love the dissertation topic! Would you mind sharing your findings with me when you finish?

Thanks!

Meagan

Meagan Scott Hoffman, Ph.D.
Associate Professor / 4-H Youth Development Specialist
Center for 4-H Youth Development
NORTH DAKOTA STATE UNIVERSITY

▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮▮

Figure 4. The Targeting Life Skills model (p. 201)

From:
To:
Subject: Targeting Life Skills Iowa
Date: Friday, February 3, 2023 11:44:54 AM
Attachments: image001.png

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Virginia 4-H and/or Ruth Wallace
Targeting Life Skills
Access files at:

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Thank you, and please feel free to contact me if you have any further questions.

Bonnie Dalager | 4-H Youth Development
she|her|hers
Iowa State University Extension and Outreach
4-H Educational Design and Development Manager

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Extension and Outreach

Figure 5. The 4-H Thriving model (p. 202)

4-H Thriving Model Images
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Date: 02-02-2023

Mary E. Arnold, PhD
Director, Youth Development Research and Practice
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