

**AN EVALUATION OF A TEXAS
AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM:
DETERMINING PROGRAM IMPACTS ON ALUMNI**

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

Leadership development among agriculturalists will be required if agriculture is to meet the nutritional demands of a burgeoning world population. It is expected that the global population will exceed nine billion people by the year 2050. To meet the food needs of this population, it is anticipated that United States food production will need to increase by seventy percent. The Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program has been offered in Texas as part of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service beginning with the first class in 1988. The purpose of this study was to determine if alumni of the TALL Program perceived they had been impacted by the program in respect to their level of understanding of issues, personal and relational attributes, and involvement in public policy as a result of their participation in the TALL program. The target population was defined as the 313 graduates of Classes I - XIII of the TALL Program and the accessible population of 291 were defined as those graduates for whom email addresses were available. Because this is a relatively small population, a census study was conducted. The questionnaire for this study was developed based upon a review of the literature and based upon other research instruments identified in related research. Characteristics of gender, TALL class affiliation, and occupation were utilized as independent variables. Comparisons based upon these variables returned no statistically significant differences. Findings indicated that participants perceived positive growth in understanding of factors affecting agriculture, awareness and beliefs, strengthening of personal and professional relationships, and an increased involvement

in agricultural and non-agricultural public policy. Program alumni ranked TALL above all other formal educational settings as it related to their ability to manage organizations.

DEDICATION

Dedicated to Stacy, Regan, and Reed

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There are so many people that I need to thank for the opportunity to reach this milestone in my life. It is through your encouragement that I have made it to this point.

To my wife, Stacy, your love, patience, encouragement, persistence, and prayers are why I am where I am today. You have been supportive of me, my career, and my educational pursuits and have sacrificed so much to make this happen. I haven't thanked you enough and will never be able to thank you for all you have done. You are my rock, my soulmate, my best friend, and my hero. I could only dream to be as kind, loving, and joy-filled as you are. I am looking forward to putting school behind me so I can focus on being the husband that you deserve. I know – Diamonds!

To my children, Regan and Reed, I know that you get tired of our philosophical discussions, but I hope that in finishing this race I have served as an example to you that you can truly accomplish anything that you put our minds to. The two of you have been a significant source of motivation for me to complete my degree and I want nothing more than for you to be as proud to have me as your dad, as I am to have you as my daughter and son. I love you both and will never tire in my pride of your character and accomplishments. You are special individuals and will make a remarkable impact on this world.

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TABLE OF CONTENTS

	Page
ABSTRACT	ii
DEDICATION	iv
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	v
TABLE OF CONTENTS	viii
LIST OF FIGURES.....	xi
LIST OF TABLES	xii
CHAPTER I INTRODUCTION	1
Background	1
TALL Program.....	2
Statement of the Problem	3
Purpose and Objectives	4
Purpose	4
Research Objectives	4
Significance of the Study	5
Definition of Terms	5
Limitations of the Study.....	6
Summary	6
CHAPTER II REVIEW OF LITERATURE.....	7
Background of Extension	7
Agriculturally – Based Leadership Development Programs.....	10
Understanding of Agricultural Issues.....	12
Personal and Professional Relationships.....	14
Involvement in Public Policy	15
Theoretical Framework	17
Adult Learning Theory.....	17
Kolb Learning Cycle	18
Transformational Leadership	20
Leadership Skills Approach	24
A Conceptual Model for the Study.....	25

CHAPTER III RESEARCH METHODOLOGY	27
Introduction	27
Purpose and Objectives	27
Population.....	28
Instrumentation.....	28
Data Collection.....	29
Data Analysis	31
CHAPTER IV FINDINGS.....	32
Population Description.....	32
Objective 1	35
Objective 2	36
Objective 3	38
Objective 4	40
Objective 5	42
Objective 6	42
CHAPTER V SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS.....	44
Introduction	44
Purpose and Objectives	44
Summary of Findings.....	45
Objective 1	45
Objective 2	47
Objective 3	48
Objective 4	50
Objective 5	51
Objective 6	52
Recommendations for Practice.....	53
Recommendations for Future Research	54
REFERENCES.....	57
APPENDIX A	66
APPENDIX B	71
APPENDIX C	72
APPENDIX D	73
APPENDIX E.....	74

APPENDIX F75

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
Figure 1. Kolb Learning Cycle.....	19
Figure 2. Transformational Leadership Model	21
Figure 3. Leadership Skills Approach.....	25
Figure 4. Conceptual Model of Agricultural Leadership Programs.....	26

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
Table 1	Frequencies and Percentages for Class Representation and Gender of Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program Evaluation for Classes I-XIII.....33
Table 2	Frequencies and Percentages for Occupation of Responding Alumni of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program Evaluation.....34
Table 3	Frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviations of Scale Items for Understanding of Factors Affecting Agriculture for Responding Alumni of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program Evaluation..... 36
Table 4	Means and Standard Deviations of Scale Items for Change In Awareness and Beliefs for Responding Alumni of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program Evaluation..... 37
Table 5	Frequencies, Percentages, and Totals of Scale Items for Quality of Relationships for Responding Alumni of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program Evaluation..... 38
Table 6	Means and Standard Deviations of Scale Items for Level of Engagement in Agriculture Public Policy for Responding Alumni of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program Evaluation.....40
Table 7	Means and Standard Deviations of Scale Items for Level of Engagement in Non- Agriculture Public Policy for Responding Alumni of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program Evaluation.....41
Table 8	Means, Standard Deviations, Minimum and Maximum Values of Scale Items for Influence on Management of Organization for Responding Alumni of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program Evaluation..... 43

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Background

Agricultural leadership programs at the state level have a long history of success in the United States. In 1965, the Kellogg Farmers Study Program began at Michigan State University to provide young agricultural and rural leaders a broader view of society and of the world (Miller, 1976). These early programming efforts led to the creation of Rural Leadership Development Programs in many parts of the country beginning in 1983 with a grant from the W.K. Kellogg Foundation (Russon & Reinelt, 2004).

In an effort to advance the work that was initiated by the Kellogg Foundation, numerous universities and state Cooperative Extension programs followed their example and formed similar programs to develop leadership skills and advance opportunities for agriculturalists within their state. According to the International Association of Programs for Agricultural Leadership (Lamm & Carter, 2014) there are currently forty states in the United States that offer agricultural leadership programs. Twenty eight of these programs are administered by state Extension programs. The Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program was initiated by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service in 1988 as a result of the successful implementation of similar agricultural leadership development programs established by Cooperative Extension programs in other states (TALL, 2015).

TALL Program

Agricultural leadership development programs have been offered in Texas as part of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service beginning with the first class in 1988 (TALL, 2015). Participants of this program are selected from a pool of applicants based on their potential leadership capacity and desire to enhance their ability to promote and support agriculture at the local, state, national, and international levels (TALL, 2015). Past participants have represented various agricultural commodity groups and industries and have included farmers, ranchers, governmental agency employees, attorneys, breed and commodity organization staff members and directors, along with a variety of agribusiness representatives from across agriculture.

According to the United States Department of Agriculture 2012 Texas State Agricultural Overview, there are approximately 248,000 farms comprised of an estimated 130 million acres of land in Texas. The concerning statistic provided in this report, however, is that the average age of the primary farm operator in Texas is 60.1 years of age (USDA, 2012). The average age of primary farm operators in 1987, just prior to the establishment of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership Program, was 54.4 years old (USDA, 1987). This trend of aging farmers and ranchers and the uncertainty of agriculture's capacity to meet the fundamental needs of our growing population prompted the establishment of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) program. In 1986 a program director was appointed to begin to develop the programs curriculum. The first class was selected in 1988. Since this time over 300 participants have completed the two-year program. Each two year program consists of a

minimum of 455 hours of intensive training including over 300 speakers, tours, and on-sight visits across Texas and several other states as well as an international trip to gain a more global perspective of U.S. Agriculture (TALL, 2015).

The two year program is structured into eight sessions of four to ten days per session. The stated objectives of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership Program are:

- Increase knowledge and understanding of agriculture and related industries in the context of today's complex economic, political and social systems.
- Learn the processes of organizational decision-making and the role of political institutions.
- Acquire a greater appreciation of how agriculture must interact with society as a whole.
- Develop skills necessary for leadership at local, state and national levels and put those skills into practice (TALL, 2015).

Statement of the Problem

Significant funds are appropriated and contributed by donors and corporate sponsors each year to the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program conducted by the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. To date, a comprehensive evaluation of the programs' impact on the long term impact on alumni had not been conducted. Program evaluation provides for program administration, agency administration and key stakeholders a means of understanding the successes and

shortcoming of a program in an effort to better accomplish the goals of the program. This study sought to address the need for a program evaluation and determine the level of impact on program participants related to the stated goals of the TALL program.

Purpose and Objectives

Purpose

The purpose of this study was to determine if alumni of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership program perceived they had been impacted by the program in respect to their level of understanding of issues, personal and relational attributes, and involvement in public policy as a result of their participation in the TALL program.

Research Objectives

1. To determine the impact on understanding of factors affecting agriculture at the national, state, and local level.
2. To determine the impact of participation in the TALL Program on personal and relational attributes.
3. To determine the perceived change in level of involvement in agricultural public policy.
4. To determine the perceived change in level of involvement in non-agricultural public policy.
5. To compare groups to determine if differences exist based on gender, TALL class affiliation, or occupation.
6. To quantify the impact of the TALL program in comparison to other learning environments.

Significance of the Study

TALL program staff have collected and analyzed individual session evaluative data to determine participant satisfaction based on topics, speakers, and tours. The program as a whole, however, had not been evaluated to determine the impact that the program has had on the alumni after they graduated from the program. This study was designed to determine the impact on individual participants and compare these findings to the overarching established goals of the program. Similar studies have been conducted to evaluate leadership programs conducted by other state Extension programs. The significance of the study related to determining the impact of the TALL program on individual participants. These findings can provide guidance for future support of the program and possible improvements to the program.

Definition of Terms

Following is a list of terms utilized throughout this study.

- Alumni – A graduate of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program.
- Attitude – A favorable or unfavorable response formed in regards to a given matter (Ajzen, 1991)
- Statewide agricultural leadership program - Leadership development aimed at the personal growth of the participant while enhancing interpersonal skills, situational awareness, and understanding of public policy as it relates to agriculture in the state and nation (Lamm & Carter, 2014).

- Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) – The agricultural leadership development program of Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (TALL, 2015).

Limitations of the Study

The population for this study was the TALL alumni with valid e-mail addresses. As a result, coverage error is a limitation to the study. The results of this study can only be generalized to the TALL program. Additionally, portions of the survey were adopted from previous similar studies and portions were researcher developed. Because of this, measurement error could be a limitation. In an effort to address the potential measurement error, a panel of experts evaluated the survey instrument to ensure face validity.

Summary

There is limited research available to draw upon to determine the long term efficacy of agricultural leadership programs for adult audiences. This study evaluated the perceived impact of the program on past participants of an adult agricultural leadership program in respect to their level of understanding of issues, personal and relational attributes, and involvement in public policy as a result of their participation in the TALL program.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Background of Extension

The Extension program in the United States was officially established with the passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914. This federal legislation put in place the delivery mechanism of education available through the land grant universities that were established through the Morrill Act of 1862 and the agricultural research stations that were founded as a result of the Hatch Act of 1887. The initiation of the Extension program provided for the broad diffusion and application of research-based, useful, and practical information relating to agriculture and home economics. The underlying philosophy of the system was to “help people help themselves” by “taking the university to the people” (Rasmussen, 1989).

The Smith Lever Act formalized Extension in 1914, establishing USDA's partnership with land-grant universities to apply research and provide education in agriculture. Congress created the Extension system to address exclusively rural, agricultural issues. At that time, more than 50 percent of the U.S. population lived in rural areas, and 30 percent of the workforce was engaged in farming (USDA-NIFA, 2014).

The founding of Extension can be traced back to the appointment of Seaman A. Knapp as a Special Agent for the Promotion of Agriculture in the South in Terrell, Texas in 1903 (Rasmussen, 1989). His effort to establish demonstration work lead to the

eventual passage of the Smith Lever Act and established a system of rural education that continues over 100 years later.

Since its beginnings, Extension has been one of the most successful agencies in securing users' adoption of its research results (Rogers, 1995). Upon the signing of the legislation authorizing Extension, President Woodrow Wilson called it "one of the most striking educational measures ever adopted by any government" (Rasmussen, 1989). The perpetuation of Extension has been accomplished as a result of its design. Working closely with local clientele to guide the efforts of Extension programs has allowed for the adaptation to an ever changing clientele base (Wilkins, et al, 2000).

The Extension Service's first big test came during World War I, when it helped the nation meet its wartime needs by encouraging farmers to increase wheat acreage significantly, from an average of 47 million acres annually in 1913 to 74 million in 1919 (USDA-NIFA, 2014). Throughout the Great Depression, state colleges and the USDA emphasized farm management for individual farmers. Extension agents taught farmers about marketing and helped farm groups organize both buying and selling cooperatives. At the same time, Extension home economists taught farm women — who traditionally maintained the household — nutrition, surplus food canning, gardening, home poultry production, home nursing, furniture refinishing, and sewing — skills that helped many farm families survive the years of economic depression and drought (USDA-NIFA, 2014).

During World War II, the Extension Service again worked with farmers and their families, along with 4-H club members, to secure the production increases essential to

the war effort. In the years following World War II, Extension played a major role in extending information about mechanization, soil fertility, introduction to chemical based pest control, hybrid crops and other new technologies (Rasmussen, 1951).

Extension's role in extending new technologies to U.S. farmers and ranchers helped farm production increase dramatically, while the number of farms in the U.S. declined over the next five decades — from 5.4 million to 1.9 million — farm production dramatically increased. In 1950, one farmer supported the food needs of 15.5 people; in 1997, one farmer supported the food needs of almost 140 people (USDA-NIFA, 2014).

Over the last century, Extension has adapted to changing times and landscapes. Fewer than 2 percent of Americans farm for a living today, and only 17 percent of Americans now live in rural areas (USDA-NIFA, 2014). The Extension service remains a significant role in American life — rural, urban, and suburban. To address this urban population shift, Extension educational programs have been prepared and delivered to address the needs of urban audiences. Backyard gardening and home food preservation educational programs have been initiated to serve this growing clientele group. The grassroots educational efforts directed towards agricultural producers, however, has continued. With its unprecedented reach — an office in or near most of the nation's approximately 3,000 counties — Extension agents help farmers and ranchers achieve greater success, assist families with nutrition and home economics, and prepare today's youth to become leaders tomorrow (USDA-NIFA, 2014).

Agriculturally – Based Leadership Development Programs

Leadership development programs have a long history of success in preparing agriculturalists and rural leaders. The Kellogg Farmers' Study Program, initiated in 1965 at Michigan State University, was founded with the expressed purpose to “provide young agricultural and rural leaders with a broader view of society, as well as a greater sense of the world” (Miller, 1976). In an effort to advance the work that was initiated by the Kellogg Foundation, numerous universities and state Cooperative Extension programs followed their example and formed similar programs to develop leadership skills and advance opportunities for agriculturalists within their state. According to the International Association of Programs for Agricultural Leadership (Lamm & Carter, 2014), there are currently forty states in the United States that offer agricultural leadership programs. Twenty-eight of these programs are administered by state Extension programs.

The benefits of agriculture leadership programs have been documented in a number of studies (Abbingon-Cooper, 2005). The W.K. Kellogg Foundation conducted an evaluation in 2001 by surveying over 7,500 alumni of programs from the United States. They reported identifying and training effective leaders, building a strong leadership network, participation in local and statewide boards and councils, having influence on informing policy, promoting a broader perspective of agriculture and the food system, building a foundation for the future, greater recognition from major commodity groups, and greater civic and community involvement as the most significant impacts of agricultural and rural leadership development programs (Foster, 2001).

The importance of providing leadership development for community and agricultural leaders has long been recognized (Diem & Nikola, 2005). In their study of the New Jersey leadership program, Diem and Nikola (2005) found that participants identified confidence in public speaking, better understanding of the legislative process, networking, articulating opinions, cultural learning, increased confidence in ability to provide leadership, effective communication, and time management as the most useful skills attained through participation in that particular program. Adding to this, Black (2007) found increases in knowledge of self, business improvement, awareness of cultural differences and cultural awareness, and an increase in activity in the local community in a study of another agricultural leadership development program.

A study conducted of the LSU AgCenter's Agricultural Leadership Development Program determined that participants increased leadership skills and tend to become increasingly involved in agricultural and community issues (Abbington- Cooper, 2005). Respondents also indicated that they gained a better understanding of state and national issues facing agriculture systems as a result of their program participation (Abbington-Cooper, 2005).

The development of leaders within agriculture is critical to continue to provide for the food and fiber needs of a growing global population. In examining leadership development it is helpful to look at leadership theory. Dinh, Lord, et. al (2014) identified a total of 66 different leadership theory domains. They found that this diversity has brought forth novel perspectives that enrich our knowledge of leadership, it also presents several challenges that future research must address. Additionally, leaders are embedded

within organizational systems that are continually evolving, creating a more complex picture for understanding how individuals think, feel, and behave in response to changing events (Dinh, Lord, et al., 2014).

Finally, it is important to recognize the reasons no unified theory of leadership currently exist (Day, 2000). Leadership theory emphasizes many outcomes, from how leaders are perceived to how leaders affect unit performance; it involves actions of group members (Day, 2000) as well as those of formal leaders; it has been applied to levels that include events, individuals, dyads, groups, organizations, and political systems; it has focused on immediate and delayed effects; and it often incorporates contextual differences.

Understanding of Agricultural Issues

Horner (1984) found that public affairs education and leadership development programs increase problem-solving skills as well as involvement in policymaking positions. He concluded that agriculture and the nation are the ultimate benefactors of speeding up the process and making more effective policymakers of agricultural leaders. Swan (2012) wrote:

Over the next 40 years, world population is expected to swell to 9 billion people. The United Nations' Food and Agriculture Organization predicts that in that time global food production will need to increase by 70 percent in order to prevent massive famine. Simultaneously, producers must learn to cope with changes in climate, intensification of floods and droughts, depletion of resources, and

dramatic political shifts. Meeting the coming demand for food will mean addressing these large challenges head on (para. 1).

Swan further identified five major challenges facing agriculture in North America and agriculture's ability to meet the food needs of this growing population:

- Resource Depletion
 - Fossil Fuels – Used to power equipment, serves as a base for pesticides and fertilizer production, and transportation.
 - Water – Quality and quantity.
 - Topsoil Resources – Topsoil loss to erosion has increased the dependence on nitrogen supplementation.
- Land Management - Degrading and undervaluing Land.
- Food Waste – Threatens efforts in increase food production.
- Demographic Changes – A disconnected public.
- Political Issues
 - Government Policy
 - Genetically Modified Crops
 - Shortages of Migrant Workers (Swan, 2012)

To make difficult choices among competing goals requires public dialogue about what kind of food and agriculture we want, in addition to identifying the roles of markets, policies, and science in delivering them (Reganold, et al., 2011).

Personal and Professional Relationships

Little has been written on the effects that participation in a leadership development program has on personal relationships. However, much is written about the effects of feelings, mood, and personal life health on the effectiveness of leaders within organizations (George, 2000). Emotional intelligence not only entails being aware of one's emotions, but also using emotions in a functional way (2000). Leader-member exchange (LMX) theory is concerned with the nature of the relationships between leaders and each of their followers (Rowe & Guerrero, 2011; Daft, 2005; Durbin, 2007; Yukl, 2006). However, George (2000) identified the effect of mood on family relationships and put forth that "...leaders who are high on emotional intelligence may instill in their organizations a sense of enthusiasm, excitement, and optimism as well as an atmosphere of cooperation and trust through their being able to develop high quality interpersonal relationships with their followers." Developing interpersonal relationships is a key component in the development of leadership skills. It is important for leaders to build and maintain favorable relationships with peers, superiors, and outsiders who can provide information, resources, and political support (Yukl, 2012; Ibarra & Hunter, 2007; Kaplan, 1984; Kotter, 1982; Michael & Yukl, 1993). Networking is a source of information that facilitates other leadership behaviors (Yukl, 2012). Braun, Peus, Weisweiler, and Frey (2013) put forth that individual followers' job satisfaction will not only be enhanced by transformational leadership experienced in direct interactions with the supervisor, but also by leadership behavior directed toward other team members and the team as a whole.

Odom, Boyd, and Williams (2012) put forth that “deepening self-awareness involves moving from having a vague sense of self to affirming your strengths, weaknesses, and roles in which you thrive” (p. 53). Through their study they found that the greatest area of growth was developing self-awareness and that interpersonal efficacy is an important concept in developing leadership identity (2012).

Involvement in Public Policy

Two of the objectives of the TALL program are grounded upon the importance of developing skills and building personal capacity to become more involved in the development of public policy. These objectives include: Increase knowledge and understanding of agriculture and related industries in the context of today’s complex economic, political and social systems; and develop skills necessary for leadership at local, state and national levels and put those skills into practice (TALL, 2015).

Thomas Jefferson stated, “We do not have a government of the majority. We have a government of the majority who participate” (Fitch, 2010). Fitch (2010) contends that citizen’s voices can be heard if they participate in the democratic process. Political participation is the key means for the inclusion of citizens in democracies. Citizen participation is considered the cornerstone of democracy (Roberts, 2008). More citizen participation is often equated with more democracy, better accountability and more effective policy decisions (Abels, 2007). Steeleman and Ascher (1997) stated that public involvement can contribute to the creation of more informed policy, provide a normative justification for governance, and foster social, psychological, and political empowerment. Political participation in the United States has been found to be declining

through much of the twentieth century (Holyoke, 2012). Although citizen participation in policy development and democratic process has waned over the past few years, citizens who participate in the democratic process are overwhelmingly the most influential component of the lawmaking process (Fitch, 2010). In his evaluation of interest group effects, Holyoke (2012) stated, “Participation is arguably the foundation of effective representation, ensuring that those who govern articulate the policy preferences of the governed” (p. 926).

Involvement in public policy can take place at any one of several levels: Local, state, national, or international. The local level is the most permeable region of government because it is the most accessible of the levels (Nabatchi & Amsler, 2014). Citizen involvement can generate information, understanding, and agreement on problems and ways of solving those problems (Burby, 2003).

Rowe and Frewer (2000) argue that there is increasing contention that public participation in policy making is necessary to reflect democratic ideals and build trust and transparency in regulatory systems. Yang and Pandey (2011) contend that effective citizen participation in government is important to democratic governance. They concluded from their research that public management matters in citizen participation and identified four variables that are important to public management of policy. Elected official support, red tape, hierarchical authority, and transformational leadership were found to be the most important variables to public policy management (Yang & Pandey, 2011).

Theoretical Framework

There are three areas that served as the framework to guide the study: Adult learning theory, Kolb's learning cycle and transformational leadership. The agriculture leadership program under investigation is a program focused on the adult participant and the design of the program follows an experiential learning process similar to Kolb's model. Further, the leadership development program follows closely with transformational leadership principles.

Adult Learning Theory

In 1968, Malcolm Knowles proposed a distinction in learning between children and adults. He defined this new adult learning theory as "andragogy" (Merriam, 2001). Andragogy gained much attention by those trying to define the field of adult education as separate from other areas of education (Merriam, 2001).

The five assumptions underlying andragogy describe the adult learner as someone who (1) has an independent self-concept and who can direct his or her own learning, (2) has accumulated a reservoir of life experiences that is a rich resource for learning, (3) has learning needs closely related to changing social roles, (4) is problem-centered and interested in immediate application of knowledge, and (5) is motivated to learn by internal rather than external factors (Merriam, 2001). From these assumptions, Knowles (1968) proposed a program planning model for designing, implementing, and evaluating educational experiences with adults.

Robinson (1994) described the humanist learning theories as follows:

- Focus on human potential for growth, human nature, and affect.

- Locus of control is in the individual's inherent desire and capacity to grow, choose, learn, "become", self-actualize, and take responsibility for learning.
- Emphasis on student-centered learning, self-initiation, self-direction, personal involvement, self-evaluation.
- Learning involves "unleashing motivation" that is already there to accomplish goals that satisfy needs. (Robinson, 1994, p. 11)

Kolb Learning Cycle

The Kolb Learning Cycle is based on four phases that are used to describe how individuals learn. Each of the stages represents a separate learning style. Kolb (1984) further describes learning as a process which is made up of each of the four stages. There is no defined starting place on the continuum; yet moving through each of these phases internalizes learning through experiential means.

- Concrete Experiences – this is the doing phase of the cycle. The group or individual is not thinking about the task, yet simply carrying out the task.
- Reflective observation – This involves stepping back from the task and reflecting on the task experience.
- Abstract Conceptualization – This is the point in the cycle in which the learner develops an understanding of the experience.
- Active Experimentation- This is the doing part of the cycle. Learners are actively engaged in the practicing what is to be learner.

Kolb (1984) put forth the concept that learning is a major process of human adaptation. He submitted that learning occurs in all human settings and encompasses all life stages. Furthermore, he states that learning is the process whereby knowledge is created through the transformation of experience (see Figure 1).

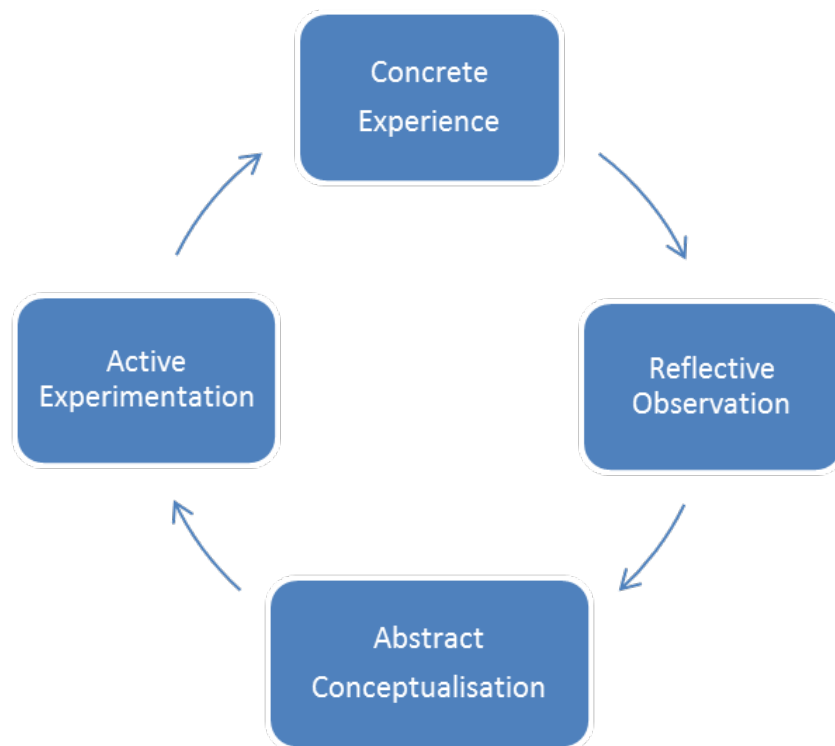


Figure 1. Kolb Learning Cycle
(Kolb, 1984)

Adult learning audiences typically have vast experience from which to draw upon and make a connection to the material that the instructor is delivering. The advantage to this approach is that it incorporates elements into the design of the

instruction to use these experiences to internalize the new instruction. Kolb brings together concepts from Dewey, Lewin, and Piaget in the development of this model (1984).

Kolb (1984) puts forth the idea that learning is considerably broader than that commonly associated with the school classroom. It occurs in all human setting and encompasses all life stages. Odem, Boyd, and Williams (2012) found that Kolb's model of experiential learning could be applied to the development of leadership skills by taking concepts learned in one context, reflecting on their application in a different context, then testing those concepts in that new context.

Transformational Leadership

Northouse (2010) describes this leadership style as one that involves leaders interacting with followers with respect to their emotions, values, ethics, standards, and long-term goals. Through the process of connecting with followers in this way, leaders have the potential to empower followers to effect change for the collective good of the organization. Through persistent and calculated efforts the leader's connection to the follower's emotions constructs an intrinsic capacity and desire to strive toward the aligned goals of the follower, leader, and the organization. Friedman (2000) identified eleven traits of a transformational leader, among these are vision, courage, confidence, caring about people, generosity, and sense of justice, humility, and charisma.

Rowe and Guerrero (2011) narrowed this to four factors of idealized influence or charisma, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (see Figure 2). Charisma is described as those that are strong role models

that followers want to emulate and whom they want to identify. They generally exhibit high moral and ethical standards of conduct (Rowe & Guerrero, 2011). Rowe and Guerrero (2011) defined motivation as leaders with high expectations with followers and leaders that motivate followers to share in the organizations vision with a high degree of commitment. These leaders encourage followers to achieve more in the interest of the group than they would if they tried to achieve through their own self interests.

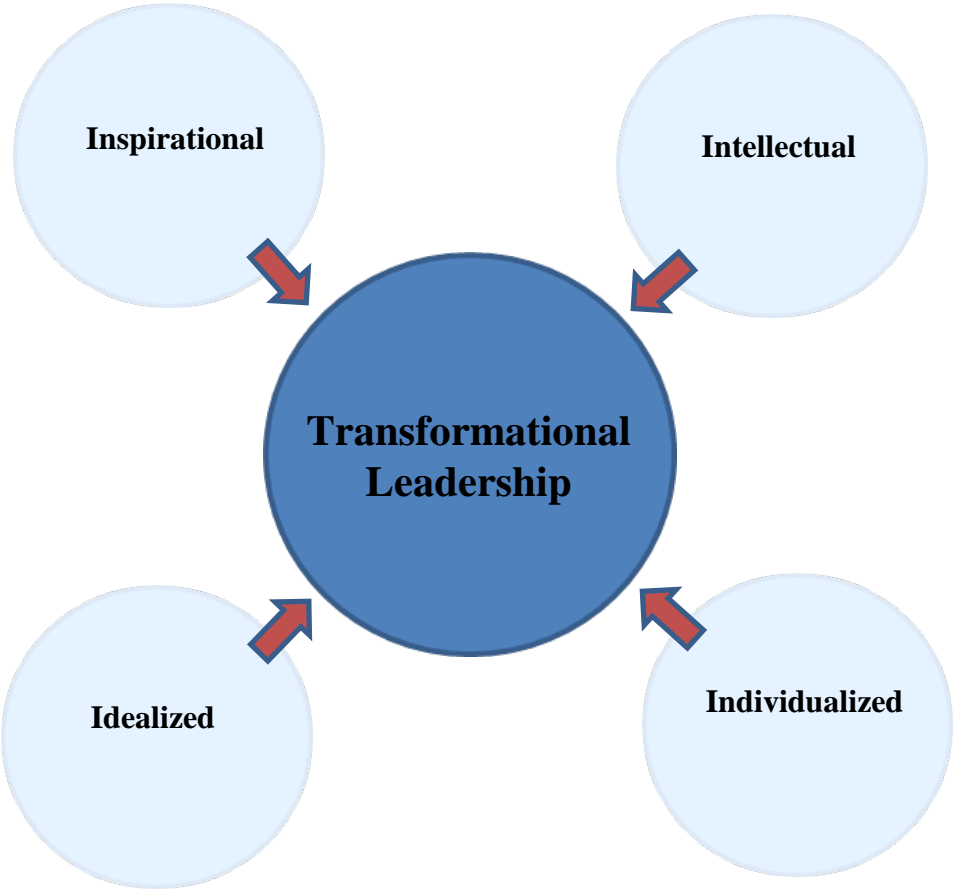


Figure 2. Transformational Leadership Model
(Rowe & Guerrero, 2011)

Stimulation is described as leaders encouraging followers to be innovative and creative. These leaders support followers as they challenge the deeply held beliefs and values of the leaders, their organizations and themselves (Rowe & Guerrero, 2011). Leaders with the consideration factor are supportive and take great care to listen to and understand their followers' needs. They appropriately coach and give advice to their followers and help them achieve self-actualization. These leaders delegate to assist followers in developing through work related challenges and care for employees in a way appropriate for each employee (Rowe & Guerrero, 2011; Northouse, 2010).

Bass (1985) puts forth that fostering transformational leadership through the policies of recruitment, selection, promotion, training, and development is likely to pay off in the health, well-being, and effective performance of the organization. Research has demonstrated that leaders at all levels can be trained to be charismatic in both verbal and non-verbal performance (Bass, Waldman, Avolio, & Bebb, 1987). Barling, Weber, and Kelloway (1996) found that subordinates of managers that received transformational leadership training perceived their managers as higher on intellectual stimulation, charisma, and individual consideration than managers in a non-trained control group. Furthermore, their study revealed a correlation between the managers training in transformational leadership and the subordinates' own commitment to the organization.

A central purpose of transformational leadership is to articulate a vision that focuses the followers' attention on the contributions to others. Transformational leadership involves "motivating followers to transcend their own self-interests for the

sake of the team, the organization or the larger polity” (Shamir, House, & Author, 1993, p. 579). To do so, transformational leaders often strive to highlight the prosocial impact of the vision how it has meaningful consequences for other people (Grant, 2007; Thompson & Bunderson, 2003). However, the broad rhetoric that makes a vision inspiring and connects it to core values may render the prosocial impact of the vision less tangible. As Shamir and colleagues (1993) noted, transformational leadership “tends to emphasize vague and distal goals” (p.583), yet prosocial impact is most tangible when employees have vivid, proximal exposure to the human beings affected by their contributions (Grant, 2007; Turner, Hadas-Halperin, & Raveh, 2008).

Kouzes and Posner (1987, 2002) found five factors that demonstrate the transformational leadership model. First, leaders need to “model the way” by knowing their own voice and expressing it to their followers, peers, and superiors through verbal communication and behavior. Next, leaders need to develop and inspire a shared vision that compels individuals to act in accordance with the vision. Third, leaders need to challenge the process by having a willingness to step out into unfamiliar territory and experiment, innovate and take risks. Fourth, leaders need to enable others to act by collaborating and developing trust with others. Finally, leaders need to encourage the heart. This suggests that leaders should recognize the need inherent in people for support and recognition (Rowe & Guerro, 2011). Rowe & Guerro (2011) conclude that transformational leadership is a broad-based perspective that describes what leaders need to do to formulate and implement major organizational change (Daft, 2005).

Leadership Skills Approach

Rowe and Guerrero (2011) contend that the skills and abilities to become an effective leader can be learned and achieved. This theory of learned leadership lies in contrast to other theories which laud that leadership traits are genetically transferred and one is either born with or without these traits. Katz (1974) described these skills as technical skills, human skills, and conceptual skills (see Figure 3).

Technical skills are those that imply an understanding of, and proficiency in, a specific kind of activity, particularly one that involves methods, processes, procedures, or techniques (Katz, 1974). Later writings on this approach to leadership added that technical skills can be further dissected into functional and problem solving skills (Shiba, 1998).

The human skills that are gained are the interpersonal skills that participants gain through their involvement in group settings (Katz, 1974). Opportunities to learn group dynamics, gain proficiency in communicating with others through emotions, attitudes and feelings abound. These are skills that develop one's ability to interact with others and influence the behaviors of a group while working toward a common goal. These are the skills that are most identifiable with recognized leaders. The ability to read the emotions of others and appeal to their motivation requires skills that are gained only through application.

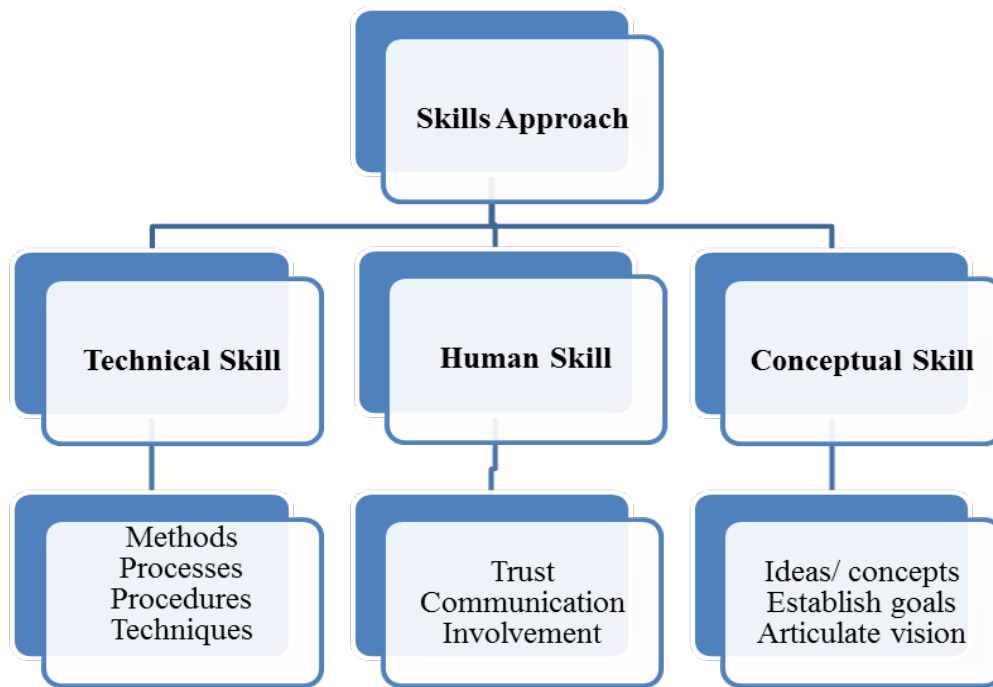


Figure 3. Leadership Skills Approach
(Katz, 1974)

Conceptual skill involves the ability to see the enterprise as a whole and to recognize the inter-dependence of the various organizational functions. It includes understanding how changes in any one part affect all of the others and it extends to visualizing the relationship of the individual business to the industry, the community, and the political, social, and economic forces of the nation as a whole (Katz, 1974).

A Conceptual Model for the Study

The conceptual model proposed in this research is based upon the experiential learning theory of Kolb (1984), the transformational leadership theory of Bass (1985),

and the adult learning theory of Knowles (1968). The proposed model attempts to capture the components of a successful agricultural leadership development program (see Figure 4).

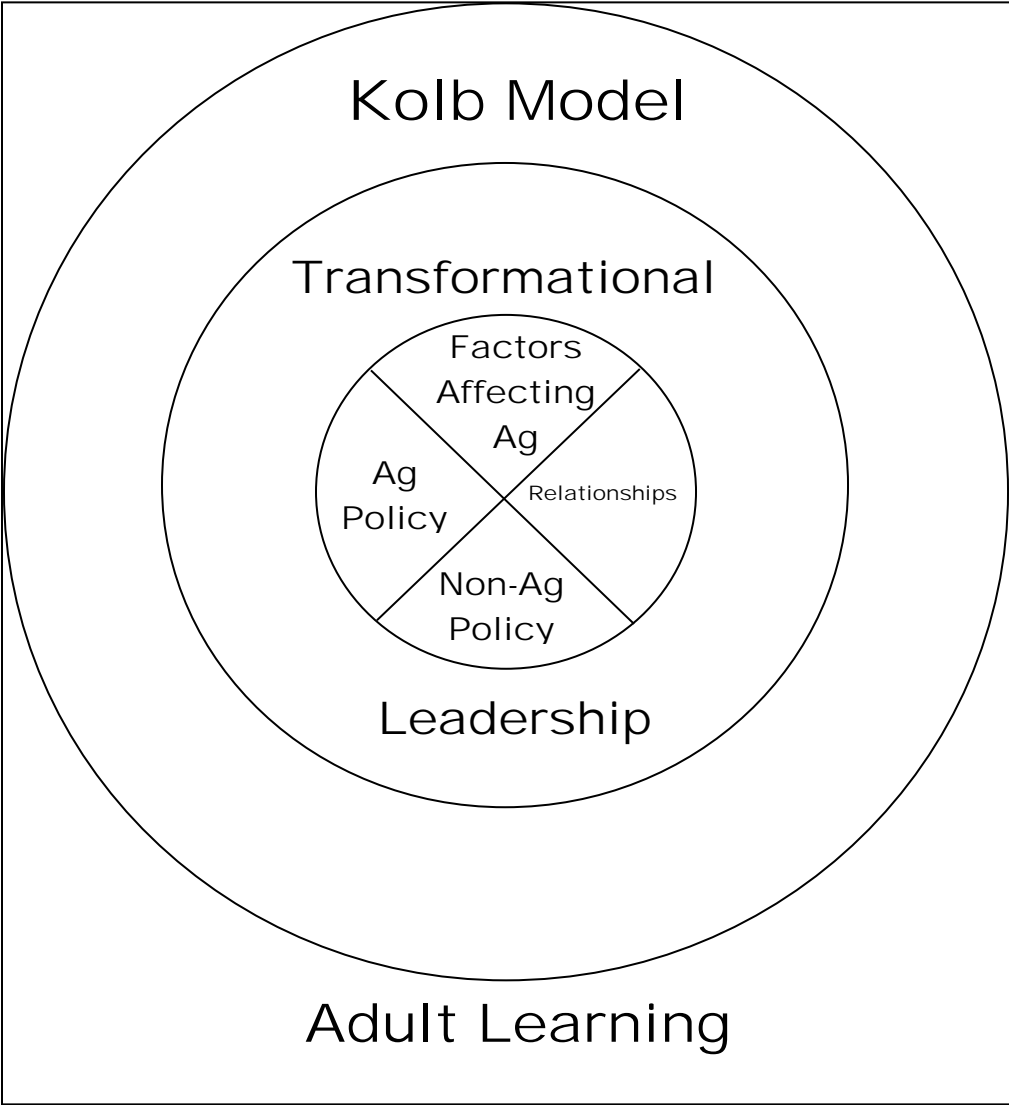


Figure 4. Conceptual Model of Agricultural Leadership Programs

CHAPTER III

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

Introduction

Quantitative methods were utilized to address the purpose of this study. Methods are discussed which include instrument development and data collection techniques. The chapter explores the methodology used in the study, the population, instrumentation, data collection, and data analysis.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose was to determine if alumni of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership program perceived they had been impacted by participation in the program in respect to their level of understanding of agricultural issues, personal and relational attributes, and involvement in public policy. The following objectives guided the study:

1. To determine the impact on understanding of factors affecting agriculture at the national, state, and local level.
2. To determine the impact of participation in the TALL Program on personal and relational attributes.
3. To determine the perceived change in level of involvement in agricultural public policy.
4. To determine the perceived change in level of involvement in non-agricultural public policy.

5. To compare groups to determine if differences exist based on gender, TALL class affiliation, or occupation.
6. To quantify the impact of the TALL program in comparison to other learning environments.

Population

The target population was defined as the 313 graduates of Classes I - XIII of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program and the accessible population of 291 were defined as those graduates for whom email addresses were available. Because this is a relatively small population, a census study was conducted.

According to Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009), web surveys are an effective way to reach large audiences quickly and efficiently; therefore, using Dillman et al.'s Tailored Design Method (2009), the questionnaire was distributed electronically using Qualtrics, a web-based survey platform. To address non-response error, days to respond were calculated as a regression variable (Lindner, Murphy, & Briers, 2001). Lindner et al. (2001) reported that if the regression coefficient is not statistically significant than there is no difference in the early and late respondents.

Instrumentation

The questionnaire for this study was developed based upon a review of the literature and based upon other research instruments identified in related research (Abbingtion-Cooper, 2005; Dhanakumar, 1993; Foster, 2001; Howell, 1985; Howell, Weir, & Cook 1979; Olson, 1992; Vantreesse & Jones, 1993; Whent, Leising, & Tibbitts., 1990). The questionnaire was validated by a panel of experts at Texas A&M

University in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications.

Data Collection

Prior to collecting data, the researcher applied for and received approval from the Texas A&M University Institutional Review Board (IRB). (see Appendix F)

Potential participants were contacted using six points of contact: pre-notification email from the program director, initial survey link email, three follow-up emails to non-responders, and thank you email (Dillman et al., 2009).

Pre-notification emails were sent seven days in advance explaining the study, its intentions, and informed the program alumni that a link to the survey instrument would be emailed within a few days. The participation email provided participants with a link to the survey instrument, enabling participants to complete the survey at their convenience and on the computer of their choice. Potential participants were also informed that the survey should take less than thirty minutes to complete. All emails were sent individually, in accordance with Dillman's principle 7.1 regarding the personalization of participation email requests (Dillman et al., 2009). Follow-up emails were sent to non-respondents one week after the initial distribution. Additional follow-up emails were sent to non-respondents fourteen days, and twenty-one days after the initial distribution. All participants' names, email addresses, and responses were kept confidential in accordance with the Texas A&M University IRB guidelines. Thank you emails were sent upon completion of the questionnaire.

Data were gathered through an online questionnaire that was emailed to alumni of the TALL program. A letter from the program director was emailed on June 30th (see Appendix D), and the letter containing a link to the online questionnaire (see Appendix E) was emailed to potential participants on July 7th. The total populations of 291 alumni were sent this emailed letter from the researcher. Twenty-seven (9.3%) emails failed delivery. There were thirty-seven responses from the first mailing, a 12.7% response. Individuals who did not begin the survey following the initial distribution were identified by Qualtrics, the survey program utilized, to receive reminder emails. The first reminder email was sent on July 14th to remind those who had not responded. An additional forty-five responses were returned following the first reminder email, which increased the response rate to 27.5%. A second reminder email was distributed on July 21st and garnered an additional fourteen responses, increasing the response rate to 32.3%. A final reminder was emailed on July 27th informing the non-respondents that the survey would close on July 31st. The response rate increased to 35.4% with a total of 103 of 291 accessible potential participants responding to the questionnaire.

Because the study did not obtain a 100% response rate, differences between respondents and non-respondents could threaten external validity. To address non-response error early and late respondents were compared. (Lindner, Murphy, & Briers, 2001). There was no significant difference ($P < 0.05$) between early responders and late responders for all survey questions with the exception of questions #12 and #13. Both of these questions were scale items as part of research objective 2. Late responders rated each of these questions higher than early responders. Therefore, the data collected from

the completed questionnaires for questions 12 and 13 can only be considered to represent the respondents to the survey. All other survey questions can be considered to represent all alumni of the TALL program.

Data Analysis

This descriptive study used quantitative data. Data were analyzed using version 22 of the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) software. Tables were generated using SPSS to analyze frequencies and descriptive statistics. Descriptive tables of means, percentages, and standard deviation were generated by SPSS. Outcomes for each scale items were treated as dependent variables. Characteristics of gender, TALL class affiliation, and occupation were utilized as independent variables.

CHAPTER IV

FINDINGS

Population Description

The population for this study was defined as the 313 graduates of Classes I - XIII of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program and the accessible population consisted of the 291 alumni for whom email addresses were available. Of the 291 email invitations sent to alumni, twenty- seven (9.3%) failed to deliver. Over 50% of the emails were opened by the recipient, 103 (35.4%) started the survey and agreed to participate, while ninety- four (32.3%) of these individuals completed the survey. Seventy-five (80%) of the respondents were male and nineteen (20%) were female. This closely mirrored the gender makeup of the target population of 231 (79.4%) male and sixty (20.6%) female (TALL, 2015). As described in Chapter 3, TALL has graduated thirteen classes. Each of the classes was represented by the survey respondents (see Table 1).

Table 1.
*Frequencies and Percentages for Class Representation and Gender of Texas
 Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program Evaluation for Classes I-XIII.*

Class	<i>f</i>	%
I	6	6.4
II	7	7.4
III	6	6.4
IV	4	4.3
V	5	5.3
VI	3	3.2
VII	10	10.6
VIII	9	9.6
IX	7	7.4
X	11	11.7
XI	9	9.6
XII	6	6.4
XIII	11	11.7
Gender		
Male	75	80.0
Female	19	20.0

Note: *N* = 94

Alumni were asked to provide their current occupation. Responses to this open ended question were grouped as agricultural producers (e.g., farmers, rancher, producers), professional career (e.g., attorneys, accountants, bankers, corporate executives), business/ agribusiness (e.g., product/ equipment sales, small business owners/ managers, agricultural service workers) , and government/other (see Table 2). Professional career respondents made up the largest group ($n = 34, 39.1\%$), followed by business/agribusiness ($n = 22, 25.3\%$), agricultural producers ($n = 21, 24.1\%$), and government/other ($n = 10, 11.5\%$).

Table 2.

Frequencies and Percentages for Occupation of Responding Alumni of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program Evaluation.

Scale Items	<i>f</i>	%
Professional	34	39.1
Business/ Agribusiness	22	25.3
Agricultural Producers	21	24.1
Government/ other	10	11.5

Note: *N* = 87

The findings reported in this chapter were based on the analysis of data collected from alumni of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) program. The survey instrument, and questions contained therein, was designed to address the following research objectives:

1. To determine the impact on understanding of factors affecting agriculture at the national, state, and local level.
2. To determine the impact of participation in the TALL Program on personal and relational attributes.
3. To determine the perceived change in level of involvement in agricultural public policy.
4. To determine the perceived change in level of involvement in non-agricultural public policy.
5. To compare groups to determine if differences exist based on gender, TALL class affiliation, or occupation.
6. To quantify the impact of the TALL program in comparison to other learning environments.

Objective 1

Research objective one was to determine the impact on understanding of factors affecting agriculture at the national, state, and local level. The first section of the survey instrument completed by program alumni was used to collect these data. Participants were asked to indicate the impact that the TALL program had on their understanding of issues affecting agriculture. Questions were presented on a four-point Likert-type scale and requested respondents to rate their change in understanding of issues affecting agriculture at the national, state, and local levels. The total index mean for impact on the level of understanding was $M = 3.19$ ($SD = .72$). This indicated that, on average, the TALL Program impacted participants' level of understanding to a medium level. Respondents' change in understanding of Political Systems increased to a high level $M = 3.61$ ($SD = .57$). Global impacts on US markets $M = 3.42$ ($SD = .67$), Environmental issues $M = 3.22$ ($SD = .75$), Urban encroachment $M = 3.13$ ($SD = .76$), Family roles and responsibilities $M = 3.09$ ($SD = .78$), Non-governmental organizations $M = 3.07$ ($SD = .68$), Global population growth $M = 3.03$ ($SD = .81$), Population demographics $M = 3.01$ ($SD = .79$), and Immigration $M = 2.86$ ($SD = .74$) fell within the medium range. The survey question for this section was: "What impact has the TALL Program had on your understanding of the following issues affecting agriculture." Table 3 presents the frequency, mean score and standard deviation of each scale item for this question.

Table 3.

Frequencies, Means, and Standard Deviations of Scale Items for Understanding of Factors Affecting Agriculture for Responding Alumni of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program Evaluation.

Scale Items	<i>f</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Political systems	97	3.61	.57
Federal policy	97	3.46	.60
Global impact on US Markets	97	3.42	.67
Environmental issues	97	3.22	.75
Urban encroachment on rural lands	97	3.13	.76
Family roles and responsibilities	97	3.09	.78
Non- governmental organizations	97	3.07	.68
Global population growth	96	3.03	.81
Population demographics	96	3.01	.79
Immigration	97	2.86	.74

All responses to the ten questions in the first section were recorded on a four point Likert-type scale: 1 = None, 2 = Low, 3 = Medium, 4 = High. The grand means for each scaled item were interpreted as follows: Grand Mean = 1.00 - 1.49: None; Grand Mean = 1.50 - 2.49: Low; Grand Mean = 2.50 - 3.49: Medium; Grand Mean = 3.5 - 4.00: High

Objective 2

Research Objective two was to determine the impact of participation in the TALL program on personal and relational attributes. The second section of the survey instrument was used to collect data related to the program's impact on participant's development of awareness and beliefs. Participants were asked to indicate their level of agreement with statements related to these personal attributes. The mean index score for awareness and beliefs was $M = 4.14$ ($SD = .70$). Respondents indicated that, on average, they agree with the scale item statements. My belief and confidence in myself $M = 4.42$ ($SD = .69$) and my sense that I can make a difference $M = 4.37$ ($SD = .69$) ranked highest in the index followed by my commitment to my life priorities $M = 4.17$ ($SD = .70$), and my awareness of life priorities $M = 4.06$ ($SD = .66$). My awareness of my values $M =$

3.96 ($SD = .73$) and my awareness of my beliefs $M = 3.86$ ($SD = .75$) ranked lowest in the index. The survey question for this section was: “The TALL Program has had a positive impact on the development of ...” Table 4 presents the item mean score and standard deviation for the set of ten items related to this question.

Table 4.
Means and Standard Deviations of Scale Items for Change In Awareness and Beliefs for Responding Alumni of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program Evaluation.

Scale Items	M	SD
My belief and confidence in myself	4.42	.69
My sense that I can make a difference	4.37	.69
My commitment to my life priorities	4.17	.70
My awareness of my life priorities	4.06	.66
My awareness of my values	3.96	.73
My awareness of my beliefs	3.86	.75

Note. All responses to the second section were recorded on a five point Likert-type scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. The grand means for each scaled item were interpreted as follows: Grand Mean = 1.00 - 1.49: Strongly Disagree; Grand Mean = 1.50 – 2.49: Disagree; Grand Mean = 2.50 – 3.49: Neither Agree nor Disagree; Grand Mean = 3.5 – 4.49: Agree; Grand Mean = 4.5 – 5.00: Strongly Agree.

The fifth section of the survey instrument was used to collect data related to the participant’s change in quality of relationships as a result of their participation in the TALL program. All responses in this section were recorded as categorical yes/no responses. Respondents overwhelmingly indicated that, on average, participation changed the quality of their relationships (84.9%). Change in the quality of relationships with my peers returned the greatest change (93.7%), followed by my business associates (91.6%), my community leaders (85.3%), and my elected officials (82.1%). Personal

relationships, my family (78.9%) and my friends (77.7%), were reported as the least changed among the scale items. The survey question for this section was: “The TALL Program has had a positive impact on the quality of my relationships with the following.” Table 5 presents the frequencies for the six items related to this question.

Table 5.
Frequencies, Percentages, and Totals of Scale Items for Quality of Relationships for Responding Alumni of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program Evaluation.

Scale Items	Yes		No		Total
	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	
My Peers	89	93.7	6	6.3	95
My business associates	87	91.6	8	8.4	95
My community leaders	81	85.3	14	14.7	95
My elected officials	78	82.1	17	17.9	95
My family	75	78.9	20	21.1	95
My Friends	73	77.7	21	22.3	94

Objective 3

Research objective three was to determine the perceived change in participant’s level of involvement in agricultural policy as a result of participating in the TALL program. The third section of the survey instrument was used to collect these data. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements relating to the impact that participation in the TALL program had on their level of engagement in agricultural public policy on a five point Likert- type scale.

Respondents reported that they are most engaged in discussions of agricultural issues in personal interactions $M = 4.46$ ($SD = 0.56$) followed by providing input to educate others on issues facing agriculture $M = 4.38$ ($SD = 0.62$), engaging in discussions of agricultural issues in organizations in which they belong $M = 4.33$ ($SD = 0.69$), and encouraging others to become involved in issues facing agriculture $M = 4.28$ ($SD = 0.71$). Respondents were less involved in agricultural issues $M = 4.25$ ($SD = .066$) and providing input to improve the quality of decisions on agricultural issues $M = 4.21$ ($SD = 0.65$) as a result of their participation in the program. On average, however, respondents agree that the TALL program had a positive impact on their involvement with agriculture public policy issues $M = 4.32$ ($SD = 0.65$). The survey question for this section was: “The TALL Program has had a positive impact on my involvement in agricultural public policy in the following ways:” Table 6 presents the mean and standard deviation for the scale items related to this question.

Table 6.

Means and Standard Deviations of Scale Items for Level of Engagement in Agriculture Public Policy for Responding Alumni of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program Evaluation.

Scale Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I engage in discussions of agricultural issues in personal interactions	4.46	.56
I provide input to educate others on issues facing agriculture	4.38	.62
I engage in discussions of agricultural issues in organizations to which I belong	4.33	.69
I encourage others to become involved in issues facing agriculture	4.28	.71
I am involved in agricultural issues	4.25	.66
I provide input to improve the quality of decisions on agricultural issues	4.21	.65

Note. All responses to the third section were recorded on a five point Likert-type scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. The grand means for each scaled item were interpreted as follows: Grand Mean = 1.00 - 1.49: Strongly Disagree; Grand Mean = 1.50 - 2.49: Disagree; Grand Mean = 2.50 - 3.49: Neither Agree nor Disagree; Grand Mean = 3.5 - 4.49: Agree; Grand Mean = 4.5 - 5.00: Strongly Agree.

Objective 4

Research objective four was to determine the perceived change in participant's level of involvement in non-agricultural public policy as a result of participating in the TALL program. The fourth section of the survey instrument was used to collect these data. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with the statements relating to the impact that participation in the TALL program had on their level of engagement in non - agricultural public policy on a five point Likert- type scale.

Alumni reported that they are most engaged in public policy discussions in personal interactions $M = 4.08$ ($SD = 0.60$), followed by engaged in public policy discussions in organizations to which they belong $M = 4.01$ ($SD = 0.75$), provide input to improve the quality of decisions on public policy issues $M = 3.97$ ($SD = 0.73$), provide input to education others about public policy issues $M = 3.94$ ($SD = 0.77$), encourage

others to become involved in public policy issues $M = 3.91$ ($SD = 0.74$), and are more involved in public policy at the local level $M = 3.72$ ($SD = 0.93$). Respondents were least involved in public policy at the state level $M = 3.49$ ($SD = 1.10$) as a result of their participation in the TALL Program. On average, however, respondents agree that the TALL program had a positive impact on their involvement with non-agriculture public policy issues $M = 3.87$ ($SD = 0.81$). The survey question for this section was: “The TALL Program has had a positive impact on my involvement in non-agricultural public policy in the following ways:” Table 7 presents the item mean score and standard deviation for the set of eight items related to his question.

Table 7.

Means and Standard Deviations of Scale Items for Level of Engagement in Non-Agriculture Public Policy for Responding Alumni of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program Evaluation.

Scale Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
I engage in Public Policy discussions in personal interactions	4.08	0.60
I engage in Public Policy discussions in organizations to which I belong	4.01	0.75
I provide input to improve the quality of decisions on public policy issues	3.97	0.73
I provide input to educate others about Public Policy issues	3.94	0.77
I encourage others to become involved in Public Policy issues	3.91	0.74
I am involved in public policy issues	3.84	0.87
I am more involved in public policy at the local level	3.72	0.93
I am more involved in public policy at the state level	3.49	1.10

Note. All responses to the fourth section were recorded on a five point Likert-type scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree nor Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree. The grand means for each scaled item were interpreted as follows: Grand Mean = 1.00 - 1.49: Strongly Disagree; Grand Mean = 1.50 - 2.49: Disagree; Grand Mean = 2.50 - 3.49: Neither Agree nor Disagree; Grand Mean = 3.5 - 4.49: Agree; Grand Mean = 4.5 - 5.00: Strongly Agree.

Objective 5

Research objective five was to compare groups to determine if differences exist based on gender, TALL class affiliation, or occupation. Data collected from respondents were compared based on gender, TALL class affiliation, and occupation category variables. Independent samples T-tests identified no significant differences between genders on any of scale items. A oneway ANOVA indicated no significant differences existed among TALL class affiliations or among occupation categories on any scale item in the survey.

Objective 6

Research objective six was to quantify the impact of the TALL program in comparison to other learning environments. TALL alumni were asked to quantify the scale items that contribute to their ability to manage their organization. The minimum and maximum values possible on constant sum scale range from 0-100. The respondents were required to assess a value to each item on the scale. The total combined score for the scale must equal 100. On average, the respondents indicated that experience had the greatest influence on their ability to manage their organization $M = 29.98$ ($SD = 10.87$). The standard deviation and the extreme minimum and maximum values indicate that alumni had a wide variation in response. TALL participation ranked highest among organized trainings, $M = 17.14$ ($SD = 7.77$), above other professional development $M = 16.34$ ($SD = 7.60$), and higher than formal educational setting of college $M = 15.15$ ($SD = 8.18$), and high school $M = 3.27$ ($SD = 5.37$). Table 8 presents the mean, standard

deviation, minimum and maximum values for each learning environment related to his question.

Table 8.

Means, Standard Deviations, Minimum and Maximum Values of Scale Items for Influence on Management of Organization for Responding Alumni of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) Program Evaluation.

Scale Items	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Min	Max
Experience	28.98	10.87	5	70
On the job training	19.13	8.39	0	43
TALL participation	17.14	7.77	0	41
Professional development	16.34	7.60	0	45
College	15.15	8.18	0	41
High school	3.27	5.37	0	26

Note. These items were presented to respondents as a constant sum scale using Qualtrics slide bar option.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Introduction

This chapter summarizes the study and discusses the conclusions, implications and recommendations that have been drawn based on the study. Recommendations for future research are also provided.

Purpose and Objectives

The stated purpose of this study was to determine if alumni of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership program had a change in their level of leadership and involvement in community and agricultural issues as a result of their participation in the TALL program. The following research objectives guided this study:

1. Determine the change in level of understanding of factors affecting agriculture at the national, state, and local level.
2. Determine the impact of participation in the TALL Program on personal and relational attributes.
3. Determine the perceived change in level of involvement in agricultural public policy.
4. Determine the perceived change in level of involvement in non-agricultural public policy.
5. Compare groups to determine if differences exist based on gender, TALL class affiliation, or occupation.

6. Quantify the perceived impact of the TALL program in comparison to other learning environments.

Descriptive statistics were presented to summarize the responses and the variables and outcomes were tested against gender, class affiliation, and occupation.

The target population for this study was the 291 TALL alumni who were accessible by email. As a result of the relatively small population, the researcher chose to perform a census study. The questionnaire for this study was developed from the review of the literature and based upon other research instruments identified in related research. The questionnaire was validated by a panel of experts at Texas A&M University in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communications. A total of 103 alumni agreed to participate in the study and 94 completed the survey resulting in an overall response rate of 32.3%.

Summary of Findings

Objective 1

Objective one was to determine the change in level of understanding of factors affecting agriculture at the national, state, and local level. Finding from this study indicate that participation in the TALL program impacted the participants' level of understanding of issues affecting agriculture at the national, state and local level. The grand mean for the scale was 3.19, which indicates that alumni have a perception of a greater understanding of issues affecting agriculture as a result of their participation in the program.

Conclusions

Those scale items that ranked highest included political systems, federal policy, and global impacts on United States markets. Furthermore, the findings indicate positive growth in understanding of factors affecting agriculture. This demonstrates that the program is meeting one of its stated objectives: Increase knowledge and understanding of agriculture and related industries in the context of today's complex economic, political, and social systems. However, the lower than expected response related to alumni level of understanding of immigration as a factor affecting agriculture should be addressed in future programming. Zahniser, Hertz, Dixon, and Rimmer (2012) put forth that Agriculture's reliance on foreign-born workers, coupled with the desire of many Americans to control unauthorized immigration, makes the question of how to address the unauthorized status of many farmworkers one of the more challenging agricultural policy issues of the early 21st century.

Implications

A review of the findings reveals that the program may benefit through a critical review of current research that identifies the most critical issues facing agriculture and revise the program curriculum to bring about greater understanding of these issues. However, it is unclear from the findings if the lower mean scores for these critical issues facing agriculture are a result of a lack of programmatic focus on these issues or if the participants enter the program with a high level of understanding on these issues as a result of their exposure to them through their own life experiences. If the participant entered the program with a high level of understanding of these issues then it would be

expected that their level of understanding of those issues as a result of participation in the TALL program would be lower.

Objective 2

Objective two was to determine the impact of participation in the TALL Program on personal and relational attributes. The findings indicate that the personal and relational attributes of alumni were positively impacted by their participation in the program. The development of awareness and beliefs grand mean was 4.14. This indicates that the alumni agree that their participation in the program impacted their personal awareness and beliefs. Furthermore, the findings communicate that the greatest increase was in the alumni's belief and confidence in themselves, $M = 4.42$, and their sense that they can make a difference, $M = 4.37$. However, the impact related to the awareness of their values, $M = 3.96$, and awareness of their beliefs, $M = 3.86$, ranked lowest in the scale.

The findings also indicate that the alumni's quality of relationships was positively impacted as a result of their participation in the program. The greatest change in alumni was in the quality of their relationships with their peers and business associates, while the quality of their relationship with family and friends ranked lowest in the scale.

Conclusions

Findings reveal that the TALL program has had a positive impact on participants' awareness and beliefs. These findings are in agreement with the findings of a similar study (Abbingtion-Cooper, 2005). This conclusion is based on the findings that

the grand mean for awareness and beliefs fell within the agree range, as did each of the scale items. The quality of relationships as a result of participating in the program ranked highest for peers (93.7%) and business associates (91.6%). The findings, however, indicate that the change in quality of relationships was lowest for personal relationship of family and friends. The reason for this result could be due to the lack of the program curriculum's focus on these personal relationships, while there is a greater emphasis on networking and professional relationship development (Yukl, 2012). Even so, greater than three-fourths of the alumni reported improved relationships with family (78.9%) and friends (77.7%) as a result of their participation in the TALL program.

Implications

The findings indicate that the TALL Program is positively impacting the personal leadership development of participants. The staff may benefit from a more detailed evaluation of the effects of the program on personal relationships to ensure that the demands of participation in the program do not have a negative effect on personal relationships. Black and Earnest (2009) found that 38% of the respondents to their survey of the Ohio Statewide Agricultural Leadership Program indicated relationships with their spouse, family, and/ or farm being negatively affected by their participation in the program.

Objective 3

Objective three was to determine the perceived change in level of involvement in agricultural public policy. Based on the finding, it was concluded that alumni of the TALL program are more likely to engage in agricultural public policy in personal

interactions. They are less likely to become personally involved or provide input on decisions related to agricultural issues. The findings also indicate that participants are more likely to engage in agricultural policy discussions in personal interactions ($M = 4.46$) and provide input to educate others ($M = 4.38$) than to become personally involved ($M = 4.25$) or provide direct input into the quality of policy decisions ($M = 4.21$). Nonetheless, the grand mean ($M = 4.32$) provides evidence that alumni are more likely to engage in agricultural public policy than they would have prior to participating in the TALL program.

Conclusions

In regard to participants' level of involvement in agricultural public policy, findings reveal a consistent pattern of involvement. Alumni are more likely to involve themselves in policy discussions in personal interactions and within organizations than to get personally involved in providing input into policy decisions. These findings are consistent with Nabatchi and Amsler (2014) in that people are more likely to become involved in local policy than state, national or international because it is the most permeable level. These findings are significant in demonstrating the success of the program. Two of the four stated programmatic objectives of the TALL program relate to this research objective. This demonstrates its level of importance that the agency, program staff, and advisory group place on public policy engagement as a primary skill that should be attained by participants.

Implications

The finding that alumni are least likely to become involved in public policy on the local and state level should be utilized by the program staff to better meet their stated objective of “developing skills necessary for leadership at the local, state, and national levels.” The findings indicate that as the intensity of the level of participation increases from engagement through personal interaction to serving in a leadership capacity through direct involvement in public policy, the level of agreement with the statements decreases. Nonetheless, the high mean scores indicate that, overall, the TALL program had a significant impact on the level of involvement in agricultural public policy. It is concluded that the primary reason for this is due to the programs intense focus on public policy education. Furthermore, the influence of the current program director and his interest in and enthusiasm for public policy engagement and the level of importance that is demonstrated cannot be ignored as a primary contributing factor to the programmatic success and the significant impact upon alumni.

Objective 4

Objective four was to determine the perceived change in level of involvement in non-agricultural public policy. Findings lead the researcher to conclude that TALL alumni engage in non-agricultural public policy at a level similar to their engagement in agriculture issues. Although the grand mean ($M = 3.87$) was lower for engagement in non-agricultural issues compared to the findings in objective 3, the grand mean for the scale remained within the agree range. Therefore, the findings support the conclusion

that TALL alumni are more likely to engage in non-agricultural issues than would be expected if they had not participated in the program.

Conclusions

Similar to the conclusions reach in Objective 3, alumni are more likely to involve themselves in policy discussions in personal interactions and within organizations than to get personally involved in providing input into policy decisions. Again, these findings are consistent with Nabatchi and Amsler (2014) in that people are more likely to become involved in local policy than state, national or international because it is the most permeable level.

Implications

The findings indicate that as the intensity of the level of involvement in non-agricultural public policy increased, the agreement with the statements decreased. It was concluded that the participants' expression of leadership behaviors is suppressed at the higher levels of involvement in public policy. However, the mean scores indicate that the alumni mostly agree that the TALL program has had an impact on their involvement in non-agricultural public policy.

Objective 5

Objective five was to compare groups to determine if differences exist based on gender, TALL class affiliation, or occupation. When compared based on gender, TALL class affiliation, and occupation the findings show that there was no statistical differences present. Therefore, it was concluded that gender, TALL class affiliation, and

occupation are not indicators of statistically significant differences on any of the scales measured.

Conclusions

The finding that there is no statistical difference ($P < 0.05$) among alumni based upon gender, class affiliation, or occupation indicates that the program is achieving success in providing leadership development training with equal success regardless of gender or occupation and has done so consistently throughout the life of the program.

Implications

The implication for the program and for the agency is that these findings provide support for Extension to continue to meet its mandate of providing Extension education equally to all people.

Objective 6

Objective six was to quantify the perceived impact of the TALL program in comparison to other learning environments. Findings reveal a strong agreement with Kolb's (1984) concept that learning occurs in all human settings and that learning is considerably broader than that commonly associated with formal learning environments. TALL alumni identified "experience" as the leading influence on their ability to manage their organizations ($M = 28.96$) on a constant sum scale. This was followed by "on the job training" ($M = 19.13$). "TALL participation" ranked below these as the highest ranking formal developmental education program ($M = 17.14$). Tall participation ranked

higher than “other professional development” ($M = 16.34$), “College” ($M = 15.15$), and “High School” ($M = 3.27$) on a constant sum scale.

Conclusions

The influence of the TALL program on organizational management is highly recognized by the program’s alumni. In following with the writings of Kolb (1984), experience was the most significant contributing factor to managerial success, contributing just fewer than thirty percent of the total on a constant sum scale. The ranking of TALL participation higher than other formal learning occurrences, however, gives high praise to the programs’ impact on participant’s ability to lead and manage within organizational settings.

Implications

These findings should be utilized by the program staff to demonstrate the value of TALL participation, not as an alternative to formal education or other professional development, but as an avenue to increase the individual’s capacity to lead and manage organizations effectively.

Recommendations for Practice

Based on the conclusions and findings, major programming changes were not deemed necessary. It is clear that TALL Alumni are increasing their self-awareness, have a greater understanding of the issues affecting agriculture, and are more involved in public policy than they were prior to participating. However, the findings indicate that alumni lack the developed leadership to move beyond the low levels of involvement in public policy. A stated objective of the TALL program is to develop skills necessary for

leadership at local, state and national levels and put those skills into practice (TALL, 2015). The results of this study indicate a need for improvement to more fully accomplish this objective. Program staff should review the program curriculum and make modifications to further develop the leadership skills among alumni in an effort to increase leadership at the higher levels of public policy engagement.

The finding that “experience” is a leading factor in alumni’s ability to manage organizations provides evidence that components of the program should be re-designed to draw upon the participants’ life experiences to enhance learning. Class participants are required to complete “homework” assignments prior to each class session. It is recommended that the program staff review the current assignments to more effectively draw upon the tenants of Kolb’s (1984) experiential learning model in an effort to strengthen the learning process. It is also recommended that the participant selection committee seek candidates for future classes who are more likely to become involved in leadership capacities at all levels.

Finally, the findings indicate that the TALL program has made significant impacts on alumni. The successes of this program could serve as a valuable resource for other similar agricultural leadership development programs.

Recommendations for Future Research

Based on the findings of this study and on the findings of similar studies, recommendations for future research have been identified. Previous research regarding the program as it relates to the gain in understanding of issues, public policy involvement, and the change on awareness, beliefs and relationships had not been

conducted to determine the impact of the TALL program. This study served as a baseline to understand the change in alumni as a result of their participation from their own personal perspective. The following future research is recommended:

- Administer a pre and post- test to participants to determine the short term gains in leadership skills with intent to adopt. This would be useful to compare to medium and long term participant evaluations to document changes in the level of adoption over time.
- Conduct a qualitative study utilizing interviews and focus groups to gain a better understanding of why change in behavior did or did not occur. This could be useful to reevaluate the protocol and criteria used by the selection committee in selection of future participants.
- Conduct a 360 degree evaluation to research program staff, alumni employers, family members, peers, and stakeholders to detect levels of change. This would be useful to identify programmatic strengths and weaknesses in a more comprehensive manner.
- Identify a method to adequately determine the economic impact of agricultural leadership development programs.
- Conduct an observational study to determine the impact that class dynamics, interactions between participants and open discussions have on the participants.
- Investigate differences among age groups and compare groups based on both current age and age during participation to determine if differences exist.

- Compare agricultural producers to all other occupations to determine if there are differences in the program's impact on participants.

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APPENDIX A

INSTRUMENT



Cover page

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. If you decide to participate in this study, this form will also be used to provide you with relevant information about the study.

You are being asked to participate in a research project studying TALL Alumni perceptions and attitudes about your TALL experience. The purpose of this study is to better understand how alumni perceive their personal change as a result in participating in the TALL program. You were chosen for this survey based on your status as a TALL Alumni.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an on-line survey in which we will ask you questions about your perceptions and attitudes associated with your participation in the TALL program. This study will take no more than 30 minutes to complete.

What are the risks involved in this study?

The risks associated in this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, data garnered from this study will provide useful information that will be used to improve the TALL program for the benefit of future participants and ultimately, Texas agriculture.

Do I have to participate?

No. Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without your current or future relations with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service or TALL being affected.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?

This study is confidential. The records for this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only research personnel will have access to the records.

Whom do I contact with questions about the research?

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Peter McGill at 979-845-0845 or pjmcguill@ag.tamu.edu.

Whom do I contact about my rights as a research participant?

This research study has been reviewed by the Human Subjects' Protection Program and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. For questions about your rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may contact the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program at (979) 458-4067, toll-free at 1-855-795-8636, or email at irb@tamu.edu.

I agree to participate

Block 9

Thank you for agreeing to take this survey. The next few minutes could have a lasting impact on the TALL program. Please answer all questions to the best of your ability and thanks for your assistance to improve this Leadership Experience!

What impact has the TALL Program had on your understanding of the following issues affecting **Agriculture**.

	None	Low	Medium	High
Global impact on US Markets	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Environmental issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Political systems	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Global population growth	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Immigration	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Non- governmental organizations	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Urban encroachment on rural lands	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Family roles and responsibilities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Federal policy	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Population demographics	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Block 2

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements.

The TALL Program has had a positive impact on the development of...

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
My awareness of my life priorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My awareness of my beliefs	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My awareness of my values	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My belief and confidence in myself	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My commitment to my life priorities	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My sense that I can make a difference	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Block 3

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

The TALL Program has had a positive impact on my involvement in agricultural public policy in the following ways:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am involved in agricultural issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

I engage in discussions of agricultural issues in organizations to which I belong	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I engage in discussions of agricultural issues in personal interactions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I provide input to educate others on issues facing agriculture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I provide input to improve the quality of decisions on agricultural issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I encourage others to become involved in issues facing agriculture	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Block 4

Please indicate your level of agreement with the following statements

The TALL Program has had a positive impact on my involvement in non-agricultural public policy in the following ways:

	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Neither Agree nor Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree
I am involved in public policy issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am engaged in public policy discussions in organizations to which I belong	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am engaged in public policy discussions in personal interactions	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I provide input to educate others about public policy issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I provide input to improve the quality of decisions on public issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I encourage others to become involved in public policy issues	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am more involved in public policy at the local level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
I am more involved in public policy at the state level	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Block 5

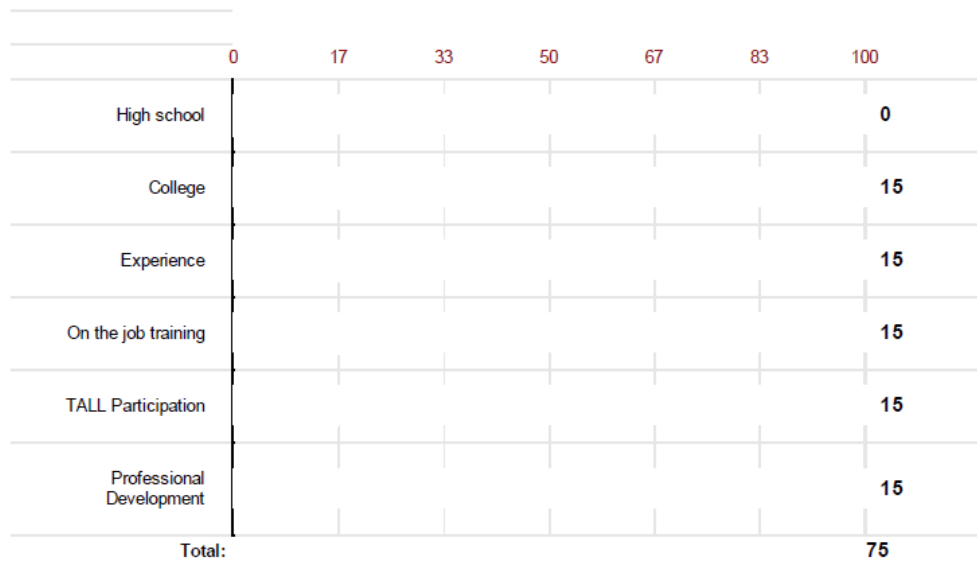
The TALL Program has had a positive impact on the quality of my relationships with the following:

	Yes	No
My business associates	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My community leaders	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My elected officials	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My family	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My Friends	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My Peers	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Block 7

What percent of the following factors contribute to your overall management of your organization?

Click and drag slide bar to the appropriate level. Total must equal 100%



Block 7

What is the total annual budget that **you** have direct management of?
 (business owner/ CEO =total budget, department manager= departmental budget, etc)

Budget Managed (\$0,000,000)

Block 7

What TALL Class are you a member of?

Class I
 Class II
 Class III
 Class IV
 Class V
 Class VI
 Class VII
 Class VIII
 Class IX
 Class X

You are?

- Male
- Female

What is your occupation?

APPENDIX B

SURVEY INSTRUMENT INFORMATION SHEET

Information Sheet Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership Survey

Introduction

The purpose of this form is to provide you information that may affect your decision as to whether or not to participate in this research study. If you decide to participate in this study, this form will also be used to provide you with relevant information about the study.

You are being asked to participate in a research project studying TALL Alumni perceptions and attitudes about your TALL experience. The purpose of this study is to better understand how alumni perceive their personal change as a result in participating in the TALL program. You were chosen for this survey based on you status as a TALL Alumni.

What will I be asked to do?

If you agree to participate in this study, you will be asked to complete an online survey in which we will ask you questions about your perceptions and attitudes associated with your participation in the TALL program. This study will take no more than 30 minutes to complete.

What are the risks involved in this study?

The risks associated in this study are minimal, and are not greater than risks ordinarily encountered in daily life.

What are the possible benefits of this study?

You will receive no direct benefit from participating in this study; however, data garnered from this study will provide useful information that will be used to improve the TALL program for the benefit of future participants and ultimately, Texas agriculture.

Do I have to participate?

No. Your participation is voluntary. You may decide not to participate or to withdraw at any time without your current or future relations with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service or TALL being affected.

Who will know about my participation in this research study?

This study is confidential. The records for this study will be kept private. No identifiers linking you to this study will be included in any sort of report that might be published. Research records will be stored securely and only research personnel will have access to the records.

Whom do I contact with questions about the research?

If you have questions regarding this study, you may contact Peter McGill at 979-845-0845 or pjmccguill@ag.tamu.edu.

Whom do I contact about my rights as a research participant?

This research study has been reviewed by the Human Subjects' Protection Program and/or the Institutional Review Board at Texas A&M University. For questions about your rights as a research participant; or if you have questions, complaints, or concerns about the research, you may contact the Texas A&M University Human Subjects Protection Program at 979.458.4067, toll-free at 1.855.795.8636, or email at irb@tamu.edu



IRB NUMBER: IRB2015-0344D
IRB APPROVAL DATE: 06/23/2015
IRB EXPIRATION DATE: 6/15/2016

APPENDIX C

TALL LETTER OF CONSENT

TEXAS AGRICULTURAL LIFETIME LEADERSHIP



May 18, 2015

As director of the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) program, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service, I grant Peter McGuill access to the names and email contacts of TALL Alumni for the purpose of collecting data as part of his dissertation research. The data collected from this research will be utilized to evaluate the long term change in participants as a result of their participation in this leadership development program.

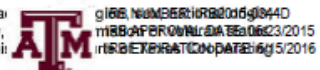
Sincerely,

Jim Mazurkiewicz, Ph.D.
Regents Fellow, Professor and Leadership
Program Director
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Department of Agricultural Leadership,
Education & Communications



Agriculture and Life Sciences Building
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
600 John Kimbrough Blvd, Ste. 518 | 2137 TAMU | College Station, Texas 77843
Tel. 979.845.1554 | Fax. 979.862.1516 | tall.tamu.edu | AgriLifeExtension.tamu.edu

Educational programs of the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service are open to all people without regard to race, age, disability, or national origin.
The Texas A&M University System, U.S. Department of Agriculture, and the County Commis



APPENDIX D

PRE-NOTICE EMAIL REQUEST FOR PARTICIPATION

June 30, 2015

Dear TALL Alumni,

Peter McGill, a PhD student at Texas A&M University, is conducting a research project on behalf of the TALL program to determine the long term outcomes and impacts on alumni as a result of participating in the program. Peter has worked closely with the TALL program for a number of years and is a graduate of the SALE-LE program, which is also coordinated out of our office. I believe that through his research we will gain valuable knowledge about our leadership development efforts. This, in turn, will provide a direct benefit to the TALL program to better illustrate the value of the TALL program on the agricultural community.

I have been involved in the development of this project and am asking each of you to participate in this study by completing the survey that Peter will be sending to you early next week. Responding to the survey should be very simple by clicking on the link that he provides. It should take no more than 30 minutes to complete and all of your responses will be kept completely confidential.

Should you have any questions regarding participating in this survey please contact Peter McGill, pjmcguill@ag.tamu.edu. Your participation in this important effort is greatly appreciated.

Sincerely,

Jim Mazurkiewicz, PhD.
TALL Director

APPENDIX E

INITIAL SURVEY EMAIL

July 7, 2015

Dear TALL Alumni,

In an effort to continue to improve the Texas Agricultural Lifetime Leadership (TALL) program, I am asking for your assistance in understanding the outcomes and impacts of state agricultural leadership development programs such as TALL. As Dr. Jim Mazurkiewicz indicated last week, I am currently a PhD student at Texas A&M University. I am also a former County Extension Agent- Agriculture, and have been an advocate for the TALL program throughout my 17 year career and I have a deep interest in the future success of the TALL program. Through this doctoral research I hope to be able to better quantify the impacts that your participation has had on you, your family, and the agricultural community. The best way that we have of learning about these outcomes and impacts is by asking alumni to share your thoughts and opinions. Dr. Jim and I are excited about this study and look forward to hearing what you have to say. I would ask that you take a few minutes to complete the online survey regarding your participation as a TALL graduate. Completing the survey should take no more than 30 minutes, and will provide us with valuable information as we continue to shape the future of the TALL program. Completing the survey is easy. Simply click on the link below or enter the web address in your internet browser and begin the survey.

Follow this link to the Survey:

<Survey Link>

Your responses are voluntary and will be kept confidential. Should you have any difficulty completing the online survey, or have any questions about the survey please contact me and I will assist you. I can be reached by telephone at (Office) 979-845-0845, (Cell) 979-240-0139, or by email at pjmccguill@ag.tamu.edu.

Sincerely,

Peter J. McGuill

Program Director, VG Young Institute of County Government
Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

APPENDIX F

IRB APPROVAL

DIVISION OF RESEARCH



DATE: June 23, 2015

MEMORANDUM

TO: Theresa PESL Murphrey
ALRSRCH - Agrilife Research - Ag Leadership, Education & Communication

FROM: Dr. James Fluckey
Chair
TAMU IRB

SUBJECT: Expedited Approval

Study Number: IRB2015-0344

Title: AN EVALUATION OF A TEXAS AGRICULTURAL LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

Approval Date: 06/23/2015

Continuing Review Due: 05/15/2016

Expiration Date: 06/15/2016

Documents Reviewed and Approved:

Only IRB-stamped approved versions of study materials (e.g., consent forms, recruitment materials, and questionnaires) can be distributed to human participants. Please log into IRIS to download the stamped, approved version of all study materials. If you are unable to locate the stamped version in IRIS, please contact the IRIS Support Team at 979.845.4969 or the IRB liaison assigned to your area.

Submission Components			
Title	Version Number	Version Date	Outcome
tall letter signed	Version 1.0	05/21/2015	Approved
tall survey 5-18-15	Version 1.0	05/21/2015	Approved
first letter_pm	Version 1.0	05/21/2015	Approved
initial contact- director	Version 1.0	05/21/2015	Approved
mcguill_proposal_v5	Version 1.0	05/21/2015	Approved
TALL Study Consent	Version 1.2	05/21/2015	Approved

Document of Consent: Waiver approved under 45 CFR 46.117 (c) 1 or 2/ 21 CFR 56.109 (c)1

Comments: This protocol has been approved.

750 Agronomy Road, Suite 2701
1186 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-1186
Tel. 979.458.1467 Fax. 979.862.3176
<http://rcb.tamu.edu>

Investigators assume the following responsibilities:

1. **Continuing Review:** The study must be renewed by the expiration date in order to continue with the research. A Continuing Review application along with required documents must be submitted by the continuing review deadline. Failure to do so may result in processing delays, study expiration, and/or loss of funding.
2. **Completion Report:** Upon completion of the research study (including data collection and analysis), a Completion Report must be submitted to the IRB.
3. **Unanticipated Problems and Adverse Events:** Unanticipated problems and adverse events must be reported to the IRB immediately.
4. **Reports of Potential Non-compliance:** Potential non-compliance, including deviations from protocol and violations, must be reported to the IRB office immediately.
5. **Amendments:** Changes to the protocol and/or study documents must be requested by submitting an Amendment to the IRB for review. The Amendment must be approved by the IRB before being implemented.
6. **Consent Forms:** When using a consent form or information sheet, the IRB stamped approved version must be used. Please log into iRIS to download the stamped approved version of the consenting instruments. If you are unable to locate the stamped version in iRIS, please contact the iRIS Support Team at 979.845.4969 or the IRB liaison assigned to your area.
7. **Post Approval Monitoring:** Expedited and full board studies may be subject to post approval monitoring. During the life of the study, please review and document study progress using the PI self-assessment found on the RCB website as a method of preparation for the potential review. Investigators are responsible for maintaining complete and accurate study records and making them available for post approval monitoring. Investigators are encouraged to request a pre-initiation site visit with the Post Approval Monitor. These visits are designed to help ensure that all necessary documents are approved and in order prior to initiating the study and to help investigators maintain compliance.
8. **Recruitment:** All approved recruitment materials will be stamped electronically by the HSPP staff and available for download from iRIS. These IRB-stamped approved documents from iRIS must be used for recruitment. For materials that are distributed to potential participants electronically and for which you can only feasibly use the approved text rather than the stamped document, the study's IRB Study Number, approval date, and expiration dates must be included in the following format: TAMU IRB#20XX-XXXX Approved: XX/XX/XXXX Expiration Date: XX/XX/XXXX.
9. **FERPA and PPRA:** Investigators conducting research with students must have appropriate approvals from the FERPA administrator at the institution where the research will be conducted in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) protects the rights of parents in students ensuring that written parental consent is required for participation in surveys, analysis, or evaluation that ask questions falling into categories of protected information.
10. **Food:** Any use of food in the conduct of human research must follow Texas A&M University Standard Administrative Procedure 24.01.01.M4.02.
11. **Payments:** Any use of payments to human research participants must follow Texas A&M University Standard Administrative Procedure 21.01.99.M0.03.

This electronic document provides notification of the review results by the Institutional Review Board.