DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 462 282 SE 065 452

AUTHOR	Croom, Barry; Flowers, James L.
TITLE	A Question of Relevance: FFA Programs and Services as Perceived by FFA Members and Non-Members.
PUB DATE	2001-00-00
NOTE	15p.
PUB TYPE	Reports - Research (143)
EDRS PRICE	MF01/PC01 Plus Postage.
DESCRIPTORS	Agricultural Education; Enrollment; Ethnicity; Secondary Education; Sex Differences; *Student Participation
IDENTIFIERS	*Future Farmers of America

ABSTRACT

The purpose of the study is to determine if there is a difference between FFA members and non-members as to their perception of FFA programs and services, and to determine if students' perceptions of FFA programs and services are influenced by gender and ethnicity, enrollment choice, prior enrollment in an agriculture class, block scheduling, grade level, and extracurricular activities. Data were collected using a questionnaire administered to 404 students enrolled in the Agriscience Applications course in 27 schools in North Carolina. It can be concluded that: A student's decision to join or not join the FFA is influenced by their perception of FFA programs and services. A student's gender, ethnicity, enrollment choice, prior enrollment in an agriculture class, block scheduling, grade level, and extracurricular activities do not influence their perceptions of the FFA programs and services. The implications are significant for the FFA and agricultural education in that students tend to join and participate in the FFA based upon the organization's ability to meet a student's need for a sense of belonging. The FFA should continue to seek ways to involve all members in positive personal growth activities that allow students to experience that sense of belonging. Based upon the responses of members, the social aspects of the organization were motivating factors in their desire to be members. (Contains 15 references.) (Author/DDR)

Reproductions supplied by EDRS are the best that can be made
from the original document.

ED 462 282

A Question of Relevance: FFA Programs and Services as Perceived by FFA Members and Non-Members.

Barry Croom
James L. Flowers

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION
Office of Educational Research and Improvement
EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES
INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

- ☐ This document has been reproduced as received from the person or organization originating it.
- ☐ Minor changes have been made to improve reproduction quality.

- Points of view or opinions stated in this document do not necessarily represent official OERI position or policy.

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Barry Croom

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

SE 065 452

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

A QUESTION OF RELEVANCE: FFA PROGRAMS AND SERVICES AS PERCEIVED BY FFA MEMBERS AND NON-MEMBERS

Barry Croom
North Carolina State University

James L. Flowers
North Carolina State University

Abstract

The purpose of the study is to determine if there is a difference between FFA members and non-members as to their perception of FFA programs and services, and to determine if students' perceptions of FFA programs and services are influenced by gender and ethnicity, enrollment choice, prior enrollment in an agriculture class, block scheduling, grade level and extracurricular activities.

Data were collected using a questionnaire administered to 404 students enrolled in the Agriscience Applications course in 27 schools in North Carolina. It can be concluded that: A student's decision to join or not join the FFA is influenced by their perception of FFA programs and services. A student's gender, ethnicity, enrollment choice, prior enrollment in an agriculture class, block scheduling, grade level and extracurricular activities do not influence their perceptions of the FFA programs and services.

The implications are significant for the FFA and agricultural education in that students tend to join and participate in the FFA based upon the organization's ability to meet a student's need for a sense of belonging. The FFA should continue to seek ways to involve all members in positive personal growth activities that allow students to experience that sense of belonging. Based upon the responses of members, the social aspects of the organization were motivating factors in their desire to be members.

Introduction

Does the FFA provide relevant programs and services to its members? In a review of selected FFA programs, it was noted that member participation had declined in North Carolina in selected career development events, scholarship programs, Agriscience student awards, and other individual award areas (North Carolina FFA Association, 1998). Because many FFA activities require student participation at the local level before advancing to state and national levels, this decline in state level participation may be indicative of less involvement by students in FFA activities at the local level.

The National FFA Organization and similar organizations in other states should consider membership numbers to be a potential predictor of a student's perception of the relevance of the organization (Sirkin and McDermott, 1995). If this is true, then the FFA must make substantial programmatic changes in order to more effectively satisfy students' interests and needs. One potential objection that may be offered by non-members is that FFA programs and services are not worth the financial investment one has to make in order to be an FFA member. Sirkin and

McDermott (1995) contend that members will desire to maintain their membership in an organization if they perceive that it is worth at least the value of membership dues.

Although some non-members might offer the argument that they cannot afford the cost of FFA dues, it is important to note that FFA membership dues on the state and national levels have not significantly increased. From 1928 to 1969, the total cost for national FFA dues increased from ten cents per member to 50 cents per member. From 1969 to 1989, national FFA dues increased from 50 cents per member to $3.00 per member. State FFA dues have increased in a similar fashion. From 1984 to 1995, state FFA member dues increased from $2.50 per member to $4.50 per member. In 1999, state and national dues were $4.50 and $5.00 respectively (North Carolina FFA Association, 1998). For these dues, an FFA member can expect to receive the official magazine of the National FFA Organization, The FFA New Horizons Magazine, an official membership card, eligibility to apply for FFA scholarships, eligibility to participate in FFA career development events, individual member awards programs and other local FFA activities and programs.

Theoretical Framework

Maslow introduced the concept of self-actualization in his book, Motivation and Personality. Maslow believed that the human individual is an integrated organism. It is impossible to separate the various components of a person's self. When an individual experiences hunger, it is their whole self that is hungry and not just selected physiological components. It is the whole person that has the desire for food, shelter and safety.

Until the basic physiological needs are met, the human is motivated to satisfy these needs. Once basic physiological needs are met, a different set of needs become evident. Maslow referred to these as the safety needs and characterized them as stability, security, and protection from harmful external conditions. If both the physiological and safety needs are met, then love and affection needs emerge. Maslow categorized these needs as the need for contact and intimacy.

The next level of need is identified by Maslow as the esteem needs. These needs are characterized by a person's desire for status, fame, dominance, and importance. These needs will lead the individual to feel self-confident, worthy and useful in their environment. Individuals deficient in this need will experience feelings of helplessness and weakness.

At the top of the hierarchy is self-actualization. Even if all of the other needs are met, the individual will develop a sense of restlessness and discontentment unless he or she is accomplishing goals true to oneself (Maslow, 1970).

The various levels of the hierarchy are ordered such that almost everyone proceeds instinctively through them in the same order. Maslow's original hierarchy has been adjusted to include two additional tiers between the esteem needs and self-actualization. Resting upon esteem needs are cognitive needs characterized by a person's search for knowledge and understanding. If these needs are met, the individual progresses to aesthetic needs that are identified as a person's desire for order and beauty. (Weiten, 1989). Maslow suggested that an individual progresses through this hierarchy in the order described. However, the order may be rearranged as a result of an individual's experiences. By suggesting this, Maslow recognized the

biological and social bases of human motivation (Weiten, 1989). Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs has proven to be influential in the discussion of human motivation.

Maslow's Hierarchy is relevant to this study in that it offers a basis for understanding potential reasons why students join and participate in youth organizations, namely the FFA organization. If students are motivated by self-esteem, a sense of belonging, a desire for status, and a need to feel important, then this theory may explain why students tend to join and participate in the FFA organization.

In addition to Maslow's Theory, the Expectancy-Value Theory conceptualizes the motive behind a student's decision to participate in FFA activities. FFA programs and services are directed toward helping students achieve their goals. For achievers, FFA activities should be challenging and maintain a high level of interest without being unattainable. For students motivated by a need to avoid failure, FFA activities should be provided at multiple difficulty levels so students do not become discouraged (McClelland, 1955).

The Effectiveness of FFA Programs in Meeting Students' Needs

Weatherford (1984) reported that students perceived a higher need for safety, legitimacy and self-worth, a higher sense of identity, and a stronger need to participate in society than was perceived by their respective vocation student organization advisors.

Shinn and Vaughn (1993) found that the national FFA organization should develop new career development events based upon emerging student interests and agricultural technologies. Furthermore, recognition programs should be periodically reviewed to determine their effectiveness in motivating students and the FFA should continue its efforts to promote ethnic and gender diversity in its membership. Finally, the study found that the national FFA organization should develop strategies for encouraging participation at all levels of the organization: local, state and national.

Wingenbach and Kahler (1997) found that a positive relationship existed between a student's perception of his or her leadership and life-skill ability and participation in FFA leadership activities. In addition, Turner and Herren (1997) concluded that agricultural education students who join the FFA had a higher need for achievement, affiliation and power than non-members did. Furthermore, African American students had a higher need for power, achievement and affiliation than Caucasians and others. Female agricultural education students had higher needs for affiliation and power than their male counterparts.

Rossetti, McCaslin, and Gliem (1996) examined the factors influencing students' decisions on whether to become FFA members. Students who were members of the FFA reported that assistance in achieving future career goals and other goals, interest in FFA activities and programs and the enjoyment derived from them, and leadership skill development were major reasons for being a member. Non-FFA members responded in the study by saying that they did not have enough time for FFA activities and having more important things to do as major reasons for not joining the FFA.

One major reform initiated in North Carolina in recent years is the implementation of block scheduling in high schools. Becton (1996) investigated the impact of block scheduling on

FFA programs and activities and found that teachers believe that block scheduling has a deleterious effect on FFA member recruitment and retention. Furthermore, block scheduling was perceived to have little impact on classroom instruction or supervised agricultural experience. Communication between teachers and students not currently enrolled in agriculture classes was identified as a major problem. Wortman (1997) found that students who did not serve in official leadership positions in the local FFA chapter had no significant positive or negative perception regarding block scheduling and its impact on FFA activities. Students who served as FFA officers reported that block scheduling negatively influenced student participation in FFA activities.

Diversity Issues and FFA Membership

The traditional method of delivery for FFA programs may influence the non-traditional student's decision to participate in these programs. Sutphin, Newsom-Stewart (1995) found that males were influenced to enroll by peer pressure more than females, and were more apt to study agriculture in order to escape academic courses such as foreign language. Females were more inclined to enroll for the purpose of developing team and life skills (Sutphin, Newsom-Stewart, 1995).

Garton, Thompson and Cano (1997) found that a majority of students preferred introversion, sensing, feeling and judgment learning preferences. Conversely, teachers preferred active learning as evidenced by extroversion, intuitive, thinking and judgment learning preferences. They concluded that while teachers focus on achievement and competition, many students tend to avoid competition. Teachers who use FFA competitive events as a recruitment and retention strategy may need to proceed with caution. The structure of FFA competition is such that students may be discouraged from joining the FFA.

Research Questions

The purpose of the study is to determine the factors influencing a student's decision to join or not join the FFA. The specific research questions are:

1. Is there a difference between FFA members and non-members as to their perceptions of the effectiveness of FFA programs and services to meet an individuals needs for premier leadership, personal growth and career success?
2. Are students' perceptions of FFA programs and services influenced by gender, ethnicity and FFA membership status?
3. Are students' perceptions of FFA programs and services influenced by enrollment choice, prior enrollment in an agriculture class and FFA membership status?
4. Are students' perceptions of FFA programs and services influenced by block scheduling and FFA membership status?
5. Is there a relationship between a student's grade level and their perceptions of the value of FFA programs and services?

6. Is there a relationship between the number of clubs and formal athletic activities in which a student participates and their perceptions of FFA programs and services?

Research Procedures Used

The population for this study is first year students of agricultural education who were enrolled in the Agriscience Applications course in North Carolina schools. Four hundred and four students were selected for the study based upon the geographic region in which their school is located. Schools selected for this study all had FFA chapters and were categorized as having 33% or less FFA membership, 34-66% membership, or 67-99% membership.

Because this is descriptive research, a questionnaire was developed based upon a series of FFA program characteristics. Participants were asked to respond by indicating their agreement with a series of 18 statements regarding the image of the FFA. The response choices and their numerical values are as follows: Strongly Agree = 4, Agree = 3, Disagree = 2, Strongly Disagree = 1, and Do Not Know = 0. The midpoint of this scale was 2.5, and all mean scores above this number were interpreted be in agreement with the item. All mean scores below 2.5 were considered to be in disagreement with the item and items with a mean score of 2.5 were interpreted to represent a neutral opinion.

The scaled items were derived from the objectives of the FFA Local Program Success Model (National FFA Organization, 1997a). The Local Program Success Model was created and developed by experts in agricultural education for the purpose of improving local agricultural education programs. The researcher's graduate advisory committee, as a panel of experts in agricultural education and FFA, identified additional items to be included in the survey instrument and modified some items derived from the Local Program Success Model. The instrument was field tested and yielded a Cronbach's Alpha score of 0.88.

The data were collected and tabulated using Microsoft Excel® and transferred to the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) 8.0 for Windows®. The first procedure involved an analysis of descriptive statistics in order to have a clear profile of the sample. Descriptive statistics were generated for gender, ethnicity, grade level, prior enrollment, enrollment choice, block schedule characteristics of the school, FFA membership status, and number of clubs in which survey respondents held membership.

The next procedure involved an analysis of the first research question. A multivariate analysis was used to examine the 18 items simultaneously and if differences were determined to exist between FFA member and non-member perceptions, one-way analyses of variance determined which items accounted for the overall differences.

Prior to any multivariate analyses, the dependent variables were compared using the Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic to determine if a significant correlation existed between the scaled items on the survey instrument. Hotelling's Trace was the method for determining the level of significance in each multivariate analysis. The next procedure involved a multivariate analysis of variance test to determine if students' perceptions of FFA programs and services were influenced by selected demographic and school characteristics as described in research questions two through four. For those multivariate analyses that yielded significant differences in the main effects of independent variables, a one-way analysis of variance was performed to pinpoint any significant differences.

In addition, the Pearson Product Moment Correlation statistic was used to answer research question five by determining if a relationship existed between the grade level of students and the students' perception of FFA programs and services and question six by determining if a relationship existed between the number of clubs in which students were members and their perceptions of FFA programs and services.

Findings

The majority of study participants were males, constituting 76 % of the data sample. In all, there were 308 males and 96 females in the data sample. Females comprised 22.6 % of the members and 24.5 % of the non-members in the study. Of all participants in the study, 41.5 % indicated that they were FFA members and 58.5 % were non-members. Two hundred ninety nine Caucasian students and 102 non-Caucasian students participated in the study. To ensure the confidentiality of students responses, all ethnic groups except Caucasian were combined for data analysis.

Freshmen made up 51.7 % of the students in the survey while seniors were the fewest number of students in the sample, comprising only 5.7 % of the sample. With respect to club participation, 34% of respondents indicated that they were not members of any club or school organization and did not participate in any kind of extracurricular athletic sport. This constituted the largest number of responses in the sample. More FFA members participated in clubs and athletic activities than non-members.

Participants in the study were also asked to provide data regarding their choices in signing up for Agriscience Applications. The majority of students reported that they signed up for the class by their own free will and that this was their first agriculture class. Eighty nine percent of the students in this study report that their school is on a block schedule system.

Perceptions of FFA Members and Non-members Toward FFA Programs and Services

A multivariate analysis was performed using as the dependent variables the items on the instrument designed to measure students' opinions of FFA programs and services. The independent variable was FFA membership status. This analysis yielded a Hotelling's Trace value of 0.210 ($p<.05$). Therefore, a significant difference exists between FFA members and non-members with regard to their opinions of FFA programs and services.

Tables 1 and 2 show the responses of members and non-members with respect to their opinion of the effectiveness of FFA programs and services in meeting their needs for leadership, personal growth and career success. Most FFA members in the study agreed with the concept that the FFA teaches necessary leadership skills, producing a mean score of 3.18 ($SD = 0.51$) for this item on the instrument. FFA members agreed in their opinions as to the effectiveness of the FFA in teaching communication skills, although the mean score for this item was slightly less at 3.15 ($SD = 0.60$). Furthermore, the majority of FFA members agreed with the idea that traditional FFA leadership topics such and parliamentary procedure and public speaking are interesting, producing a mean score for this item of 2.73 ($SD = 0.81$). Non-members rated leadership topics such as parliamentary procedure and public speaking lowest among this series

of items (M=2.5, SD=0.84). The most favorable response from the non-members was in the FFA organization's ability to help students learn communication skills (M=2.90, SD=0.67). Table 1 reports the responses of students to the FFA programs and services items related to leadership development, Personal Development and Career Development Programs.

The FFA members in the study rated the ability of the FFA to help people with their educational goals highly (M=3.17, SD=0.58). The FFA members reported that FFA programs offer a great opportunity for travel (M=3.16, SD=0.59). For the majority of members, FFA programs build self-confidence (M=3.13, SD=0.58) and recognize members for their achievements (M=3.00, SD=0.68). Finally, members agreed with the idea that the FFA helps students improve their grades in school (M=2.92, SD=0.77).

Non-members in the study reported a significantly lower opinion of the FFA's ability to help students with their educational goals (M=2.93, SD=0.71), and with the concept that FFA can help students improve their grades in school (M=2.62, SD=0.73). Furthermore, non-members in the study reported significantly lower opinions of the FFA organization's ability to offer important personal growth opportunities through its travel (M=2.84, SD=0.76) and award programs (M=2.66, SD=0.77).

The FFA members in the study agreed with the idea that the FFA does indeed help students make career choices (M=3.25, SD=0.52). Furthermore, FFA members in the study reported that the FFA helps students to made better decisions whether it involves school or career choice (M=3.10, SD=0.67). Non-members in the study provided significantly lower mean scores in their opinion that the FFA helps students make better academic and career choices (M=2.90, SD=0.68).

Table 2 shows the responses of members and non-members regarding their opinions of FFA programs overall. FFA member's opinions did not rank very highly in this particular section when compared to their scores on previous items. The FFA members agreed that FFA activities were held at a convenient time and location(M=2.72, SD=0.73) and that these activities were adequately publicized (M=3.03, SD=0.73). The non-members in the study held significantly lower opinions of the idea that FFA activities are held at a convenient time and location (M=2.51, SD=0.81) and were well publicized (M=2.80, SD=0.80). Based upon the analyses performed to address the second research question, this research shows that significant differences do exist between the perceptions of FFA members and non-members as to their opinions of FFA programs and services.

Table 1. Perceptions of Members and Non-Members Regarding FFA Leadership, Personal Development and Career Development Programs

Survey Instrument Items	Members (n=168)		Non-Members (n=236)		F
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	
The FFA provides help in choosing a career.	3.25	0.52	2.98	0.64	17.41*

The FFA teaches leadership skills necessary for success in life.	3.18	0.51	2.89	0.74	16.13*
The FFA helps people with their educational goals.	3.17	0.58	2.93	0.71	11.18*
The FFA offers students with a great opportunity to travel.	3.16	0.59	2.84	0.76	16.78*
FFA activities help students learn to communicate better.	3.15	0.60	2.90	0.67	11.63*
The FFA helps students be more self-confident.	3.13	0.58	2.96	0.71	5.34*
FFA activities help students made better decisions regarding school and work.	3.10	0.67	2.90	0.68	6.47*
FFA members get a lot of attention when they win awards.	3.00	0.68	2.66	0.77	16.38*
The FFA encourages students to get a job in the agriculture industry.	2.97	0.68	2.90	0.67	0.95
FFA activities help students improve their grades.	2.92	0.77	2.62	0.73	11.18*
The FFA leadership topics like parliamentary procedure and public speaking are interesting.	2.73	0.81	2.50	0.84	5.63*

*p<.05.1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree

Table 2. Perceptions of Members and Non-Members of Overall Programs and Services

FFA Personal Development Items	Members (n=167)		Non-Members (n=236)		F
	Mean	Std. Dev.	Mean	Std. Dev.	
FFA activities seem to be well organized and	3.03	0.73	2.80	0.80	6.95*

publicized.					
FFA activities such as contests are too complicated for me.	2.96	0.82	3.14	2.67	.058
FFA activities are held at a convenient time and location for me to attend.	2.72	0.73	2.51	0.81	5.15*

*$p<.05$. 1=Strongly Disagree, 2=Disagree, 3=Agree, 4=Strongly Agree

Students' Perceptions of FFA programs and services and FFA Programs and Services as Influenced by Selected School and Demographic Factors

There were no significant differences identified in the interaction effects between FFA membership status, gender and ethnicity. The results of the analysis did once again indicate a significant difference between the mean scores of FFA members and non-members. FFA membership status and prior enrollment and enrollment choice in an agriculture class had no significant effect the opinions of students. A school's block scheduling status did not significantly influence the respondents' opinion of the FFA programs and services. Furthermore, the interaction effect of FFA membership status and block scheduling did not yield significant differences.

A Pearson Product Moment Correlation Coefficient of 0.076 ($p=.13$) for the correlation between FFA organizational image and the respondent's grade level was generated. Based upon these results, there is not a significant relationship between the respondents' grade level and their opinions of FFA programs and services. Another Pearson Product Moment Correlation was computed to test the significance of the relationship between the respondents' level of participation in school organizations on their opinions of FFA programs and services. A correlation coefficient of 0.09 ($p=.15$) for FFA programs and services was generated. There was no significant relationship found between the respondents' level of participation in school organizations and their opinions of FFA programs and services.

Conclusions

Conclusion I: A student's decision to join or not join the FFA is influenced by their perceptions of the effectiveness of FFA programs and services in their school

FFA programming makes a difference in a student's decision to join the FFA. In general, FFA members' responses to items related to the effectiveness of FFA programs and services were significantly more positive than the responses of non-members. However, it must be noted that non-members did perceive some FFA programs and services to be of value even though they chose not to become members.

Conclusion II: A student's gender and ethnicity do not influence their perceptions of FFA programs and services

Students' responses to items on the questionnaire were not significantly influenced by gender and ethnicity. The FFA has developed numerous recruiting materials in recent years that not only represent the current ethnic and gender characteristics of the membership, but also portray what FFA membership could be if it were more diverse in ethnicity and gender.

Conclusion III: Voluntary enrollment in an agriculture class and prior enrollment in an agriculture class does not influence a student's perceptions of FFA programs and services

This study did not find that student's enrollment choice or prior enrollment in an agriculture class made a significant difference in their decision to join or not join the FFA. Students who are involuntarily enrolled in an agricultural class may not necessarily be adverse to joining the FFA, just as students who voluntarily enroll in an agriculture class are not necessary motivated to join the FFA. This study did not find that prior enrollment in an agriculture class significantly influenced over a student's decision to join or not join the FFA. Even though a high number of students with prior enrollment experience were part of the study, this did not have a significant effect on the results.

Conclusion IV: Block scheduling does not influence a student's perceptions of FFA programs and services

Once considered to be an obstacle in the planning and implementation of FFA activities (Becton, 1996), block scheduling did not influence students' decision to the extent that it either encourages or discourages membership. North Carolina schools have been utilizing block scheduling for a number of years, and perhaps FFA advisors have begun to effectively recruit and retain FFA members under the system. Because a low number of students were on a traditional schedule, it would be imprudent to generalize the results of the analysis of this research question to the entire population of students that were enrolled in Agriscience Applications in the spring of 1998.

Conclusion V: Grade level does not influence a student's perceptions of FFA programs and services

This study did not find that grade level was a significant influence on the opinions of students regarding FFA programs and services.

Conclusion VI: The scope of participation in school clubs and formal athletic activities does not influence a student's perceptions of FFA programs and services

The scope of participation in school clubs and organizations might be effective in characterizing the students who might join and participate in FFA activities, but it does not singularly affect a student's opinions of the FFA organization's image and FFA programs and services.

Implications and Recommendations

The results of this study are supported in the literature by Maslow (1970) and McClelland (1955). At an age when most students are becoming eligible for FFA membership, they are also entering a period of human growth and development characterized by a need for contact, intimacy, a sense of belonging and achievement. The implications are significant for the FFA and agricultural education in that students tend to join and participate in the FFA based upon the organization's ability to meet a student's need for self-esteem. The FFA should continue to seek ways to involve all members in positive personal growth activities that allow students to experience that sense of belonging. Based upon the responses of members, the social aspects of the organization were motivating factors in their desire to be members. The FFA members in this study tended to believe that the FFA provides an equal opportunity for all students to participate in and benefit from its programs, and that many of their friends were members of the FFA. However, the students today are not necessarily interested in some of the traditions of the FFA.

Overall, FFA members believe that the FFA provides valuable assistance in helping students choose a career and also helps students achieve their educational goals. Many of the programs and services offered by the FFA are designed to encourage individuals to succeed. For students motivated by achievement, FFA activities are available that are challenging and can maintain a high level of interest without being unattainable. For those students that are motivated by a desire to avoid failure, the FFA provides programs and services with multiple difficulty levels so that students do not become discouraged. Although FFA members in the study tended to believe that the FFA has an overall positive image, they also tended to score FFA programs and services lower. As a result, the FFA might wish to commit resources to the development of new products and services that more closely parallel students' interests and needs.

Non-members generally held a lower opinion of FFA programs and services than FFA members. Perhaps the slow evolution of FFA career development events and other awards programs in North Carolina has caused the FFA to fall behind in technology, therefore driving away students who might otherwise be interested in becoming a member. The FFA organization may be able to recruit new members if they offer activities that meet and exceed the expectations of non-members. The FFA organization's educational programs could be revised to permit a closer relationship with instruction in the agricultural sciences. Learning activities could be packaged in a way that creates value beyond the cost of FFA membership dues.

The findings that emerged from this study led to certain recommendations pertaining to future research. Additional research is suggested in the area of FFA programs and services. An in-depth study into the various programs such as career development events, proficiency awards, and scholarships, would identify potential areas of weakness. Although FFA members indicated that FFA programs and services helped them reach their educational and career goals, additional research is needed to determine which programs are more effective.

To assist with recruitment and retention, additional research should be conducted into determining the most effective methods for planning and implementing FFA activities. These

results might be particularly useful to teacher education responsible for preparing agriculture teachers for field service.

One general recommendation emerged from this study. It is recommended that the National FFA Organization create within its business structure a research and development division. The purpose of this new division would be to constantly evaluate the effectiveness of the FFA in achieving its mission and goals, and to provide research findings to state FFA associations and state agencies responsible for agricultural education programs. Regardless of the method employed by the National FFA Organization, it is essential that an ongoing evaluation process be in place and operational.

References

Becton, L.K. The Impact of Alternative Scheduling on the Complete Agriculture Education Program. Unpublished masters thesis, North Carolina State University, Raleigh.

Garton, B.L., Thompson, G.W., Cano, J. (1997). Agriculture Teachers and Students: In Concert or Conflict?. Journal of Agriculture Education 38, 38-45.

Maslow, A. (1970). Motivation and Personality. (2nd Ed.) New York: Harper & Row.

McClelland, D.C. (ed.). (1955). Studies in Motivation. New York: Appleton-Century-Crofts, Inc.

National FFA Organization. (1997a). Local Program Success Manual. Alexandria, VA: Author.

North Carolina FFA Association (1998). Official records. Raleigh, NC: Author.

Rossetti, R., McCaslin, N.L., Gliem, J.A. (1996). A National wide Examination of FFA membership: factors Influencing Students' Decisions on Whether or Not to Become Members. Paper presented to the National FFA Board of Directors, Alexandria, VA.

Shinn, G., Vaughn, P. (1993) Understanding the Value of Contests and Awards: National FFA Organization. Indianapolis: Synergy Research.

Sirkin, A.F., McDermott, M.P. (1995). Keeping Members: CEO Strategies for 21st Century Success. Washington, D.C.: ASAE Foundation.

Sutphin, H.D., Newsom-Stewart, Mhora. (1995). Student's Rationale for Selection of Agriculturally Related Courses in High School by Gender and Ethnicity. Journal of Agricultural Education, 36, 54-60.

Turner, J., Herren R.V. (1997). Motivational Needs of Students Enrolled in Agri-cultural Education Programs in Georgia. Journal of Agricultural Education 38, 30-41.

Weatherford. C.G. (1984). Needs of youth as perceived by members of vocational education student organizations and their advisors. Unpublished doctoral dissertation, North Carolina State University, Raleigh.

Weiten, Wayne (1989). Psychology: Themes and Variations. Belmont, CA: Brooks/Cole Publishing.

Wingenbach, G.J., Kahler, A.A. (1997). Self-Perceived Youth Leadership and Life Skills of Iowa FFA Members. Journal of Agricultural Education 38, 18-27.

Wortman, J. (1997). Block Scheduling in Agricultural Education as Perceived by Students. Unpublished Masters Thesis. North Carolina State University, Raleigh.

SE065452

U.S. Department of Education
Office of Educational Research and Improvement (OERI)
National Library of Education (NLE)
Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC)

ERIC

REPRODUCTION RELEASE

(Specific Document)

I. DOCUMENT IDENTIFICATION:

Title: A Question of Relevance: FFA Programs and Services as Perceived by FFA Members and Non-Members

Author(s): Barry Croom, James Flowers

Corporate Source: North Carolina State University

Publication Date:

II. REPRODUCTION RELEASE:

In order to disseminate as widely as possible timely and significant materials of interest to the educational community, documents announced in the monthly abstract journal of the ERIC system, *Resources in Education* (RIE), are usually made available to users in microfiche, reproduced paper copy, and electronic media, and sold through the ERIC Document Reproduction Service (EDRS). Credit is given to the source of each document, and, if reproduction release is granted, one of the following notices is affixed to the document.

If permission is granted to reproduce and disseminate the identified document, please CHECK ONE of the following three options and sign at the bottom of the page.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 1 documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

Barry Croom

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

1

Level 1

X

Check here for Level 1 release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche or other ERIC archival media (e.g., electronic) and paper copy.

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2A documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE, AND IN ELECTRONIC MEDIA FOR ERIC COLLECTION SUBSCRIBERS ONLY, HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2A

Level 2A

X

Check here for Level 2A release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche and in electronic media for ERIC archival collection subscribers only

The sample sticker shown below will be affixed to all Level 2B documents

PERMISSION TO REPRODUCE AND DISSEMINATE THIS MATERIAL IN MICROFICHE ONLY HAS BEEN GRANTED BY

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)

2B

Level 2B

X

Check here for Level 2B release, permitting reproduction and dissemination in microfiche only

Documents will be processed as indicated provided reproduction quality permits.
If permission to reproduce is granted, but no box is checked, documents will be processed at Level 1.

I hereby grant to the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) nonexclusive permission to reproduce and disseminate this document as indicated above. Reproduction from the ERIC microfiche or electronic media by persons other than ERIC employees and its system contractors requires permission from the copyright holder. Exception is made for non-profit reproduction by libraries and other service agencies to satisfy information needs of educators in response to discrete inquiries.

Sign here, please

Signature: Barry Croom	Printed Name/Position/Title: Barry Croom, Assistant Professor
Organization/Address: NC State University	Telephone: 919.515.1759 / FAX: 919.515.9060
	E-Mail Address: barry_croom@ncsu.edu / Date: 3-25-02

12/21/2001 22:28 9195159060 AG AND EXT EDU PAGE 02/03