2011

CHARACTER EDUCATION AND 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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Character education assumes responsibility for influencing and educating youth on morals, values, beliefs and positive character attributes in order to influence them into being positive and contributing members of society. Character education is most often taught in the home, schools and community. One community organization that integrates character education into its programming is 4-H Youth Development. The purpose of this research is to view the relationships between character education and 4-H, and more so whether Kentucky 4-H programs influence the knowledge, attitudes and practices of positive character among youth leaders. This study also looked at length of 4-H involvement and gender in order to determine influence. It was found that Kentucky 4-H programs do influence positive character among youth leaders, as youth indicated that they had gained character knowledge from 4-H involvement, as well as the program had made them a better person. It was also found that the gender of youth or their length of involvement in 4-H programs does not affect the character knowledge, attitudes and practices gained from involvement. The author recommends using these positive findings to continue to expand Kentucky programs and recruit adults and youth.

KEYWORDS: Character Education, 4-H Youth Development, Positive Youth Development, CHARACTER COUNTS!, Theory of Planned Behavior

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03/02/2011
CHARACTER EDUCATION AND 4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

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CHARACTER EDUCATION AND
4-H YOUTH DEVELOPMENT

THESIS

A thesis submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Master of Science in the College of Agriculture at the University of Kentucky

By

Jessica Lynn Mullins

Jackson, Kentucky

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University of Kentucky
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2011

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Character education is a topic that is often discussed but not as often researched. Character education assumes responsibility for influencing and educating youth on morals, values, beliefs and positive character attributes in order to influence them into being positive and contributing members to society. While many character education programs are in place and recognized on local, state and national levels, are these programs making a difference?

Researching the effects of character education is important because its audience includes emerging leaders, the next generation to make an impact on society. It is important to take character education seriously, as it will influence the present and the future. We should not wait to see if the efforts of character education have come to fruition, but instead continually evaluate our current programs and build on what’s working and continue to improve what’s not. “Youth programs cannot remain static; they must expand and change so that they address the diverse and changing needs and interests of adolescents and their families” (Lerner et al., 2008, p. 19). Thus, this research focuses on evaluating the relationship between character education and a youth development program, 4-H, in order to strengthen and improve its programming efforts.

**The Umbrella of Socialization**

Before discussing character education more in-depth, it is helpful to consider the broader context on how one develops their role in society. From a young age, every individual is engaged in the process of socialization. According to Moschis and Moore, “the term socialization refers to the process by which young people acquire various patterns of cognitions and behaviors” (e.g., Gosling, 1969). Thus, socialization is the context in which individuals gain knowledge, and form beliefs, skills and behaviors they
will carry with them for a lifetime. It is the process by which youth are shaped into future civic leaders. Figure 1.1 shows the relationships that lead from socialization to character education.

![Socialization Model](image)

**Figure 1.1. Socialization Model.**

There are various influences on socialization, known as socialization agents. “A socialization agent may refer to a person or organization. In the life of every person, there are a number of people and institutions (e.g., family members, schools) directly involved in socialization that have great influence because of their frequent contact, primacy and control over rewards and punishment given to the individual” (Moschis & Moore, 1979, p. 102).

One such socialization agent includes the approach of positive youth development (PYD). “Development, after all, is a process of growth and increasing competence” (Larson, 2000, p. 170). Thus, positive youth development is a means of promoting beneficial and constructive growth among adolescents. Such growth reflects positive socialization. Catalano, et. al. (2004) summarized 15 common objectives of Positive Youth Development, including:

1. Promotes bonding
2. Fosters resilience
3. Promotes social competence
4. Promotes emotional competence
5. Promotes cognitive competence
6. Promotes behavioral competence
7. Promotes moral competence
8. Fosters self-determination
9. Fosters spirituality
10. Fosters self-efficacy
11. Fosters clear and positive identity
12. Fosters belief in the future
13. Provides recognition for positive behavior
14. Provides opportunities for prosocial involvement
15. Fosters prosocial norms (pp. 101-2).

Thus, from this list, it is obvious that positive youth development fosters many social aspects, including leadership, education and most importantly for this research, moral development (also referred to as ethics or character education). Lerner et al. (2009, p.10) infer that PYD professionals “view young people as resources to be developed rather than as problems to be managed” (Lerner, 2005; Damon, 2004). There are various PYD organizations that are dedicated to developing these youth resources, including Boy and Girls Scouts of America, Future Farmers of America, religious groups, sports teams, community organizations and 4-H Youth Development Programs. PYD programs are the hands and feet of youth socialization and youth development. It is through these programs that individuals experience, learn, grow and cultivate factors that will influence their future.

The involvement in such PYD programs leads youth to leadership and moral development (ethics) opportunities. “Ethics and leadership go hand-in-hand. And ethical environment is conducive to effective leadership, and effective leadership is conducive to ethics” (Hitt, 1990, p.1). This is a key component in the process of socialization, as researchers have aimed at explaining human behavior for centuries. “Scholarly debate on moral development and character formation extends at least as far back as Aristotle’s Nichomacean Ethics and Socrates’ Meno and continues through to modern times” (Huiit, 2004, para. 4). Researcher Jon Piaget felt that behavior is “molded by cognitive awareness” and that moral development comes in stages based on age (Robbins et al., 2006, p. 273). Lawrence Kohlberg disagreed, in that “there is not direct association between age and moral maturity” (Robbins et al., 2006, p. 275).
Instead, he proposed the theory of moral development, in which the way one behaves in regards to character begins in youth and unfolds in a longer process throughout a lifetime.

Another theory of explaining human behavior in the area of character includes researcher Carol Gilligan’s Feminist Theory, which believes that gender influenced character development and character behavior (Robbins et. al., 2006). Gilligan proposed that “women develop a moral orientation that is grounded in relationship and responsibilities rather than in the more male concern for rules and abstract principles” (Robbins et. al, 2006, p. 279). Gilligan also argued that the genders defined moral problems differently. This research will also look at gender and if there are differences between males and females in regards to the research questions.

As Figure 1.1 shows, socialization leads to youth development, which is often administered through various groups and organizations. Through youth’s involvement in these, they are exposed to leadership and moral development opportunities. These relationships all lead to character education. While all levels of the socialization model are important and contribute to the individual, this research will take a closer look at the relationships between PYD programs and character education.

Character Education

According to the Character Education Partnership, character education is defined as “efforts to help young people develop good character, which includes knowing about, caring about, and acting upon core ethical values such as fairness, honesty, compassion, responsibility, and respect for self and others” (Character Education Partnership Online, 2010). Character education has been a growing trend targeting youth, especially in the past 15 to 20 years. This is attributed to both those who feel that society is in desperate need of good character, and others who see character education as a positive, exciting and effective trend. Author Kay S. Hymowitz (2003) feels that
the character education movement is a reaction to the moral vacuum left in the wake of the social and scientific transformations of the middle and late twentieth century” (p.105). However, “large portions of research on adolescent development proceed from the assumption that adolescents are broken, in danger of being broken, or display deficits. A new perspective, that of positive youth development, tries to counterbalance the assumption of broken youth with the perspective that youth are developing individuals who display considerable assets, and who can be guided to develop to become positive and constructive contributors of society” (Lerner et al, 2008, p. 4).

Character education is more targeted at the youth of society because today’s youth are already filling many leadership roles in their schools and communities, and will continue to throughout their lifetime. Today’s youth will be tomorrow’s executives, teachers, lawyers, doctors, parents, presidents and other leaders who will continue to make an impact on the world. Research shows that the views of ethics, morals, and character traits of individuals are often formed at a young age. “People learn ethics as part of early character development” (Kolp & Rea, 2006, p. 23). Thus, educating today’s youth on good character habits and ethical practices may influence their decisions and leadership style, now and in the future, thus shaping our society.

For the purposes of this research, character is defined as what is referred to as the “Six Pillars of Character,” by character education curriculum CHARACTER COUNTS!, which include trustworthiness, respect, caring, citizenship, fairness and responsibility (Character Counts! Online, 2010). Character education is defined as educating individuals in these areas, through formal and non-formal settings. Character development is the process and influence between the education and formation of character.
Character Education Settings

To emphasize the importance of teaching good character to youth, “nineteen states address character education through legislation” (Character Education Partnership Online, 2010). Included in this legislation character mandate is Kentucky. More so, twenty-five other states either encourage and/or support character education within schools. However, character education can also be integrated into other learning contexts, such as extracurricular activities and groups, and the home. The Character Education Partnership (CEP) calls for addressing character education in all of these areas. "It is important to realize that while schools do and should play a role in the development of character, families, communities, and society in general also have an important influence (Huitt, 1999)” (as cited in Huitt, 2004, para. 14).

There has been a growth in the number of participants in character education due to mandates by state education departments. But, participation also has increased as character education curricula have been designed and implemented and character education associations established. According to the CHARACTER COUNTS! website, 41 states have schools that participate in some form of character education and 41 national organizations (including National 4-H) are involved in the programming (CC! Online, 2010). Many other cities and community clubs are involved as well. Thus, participation in character education indicates a continued concern with this issue, as well as its importance.

Overall participation by youth in character education may be influenced by various factors. For example, character education may not be available to the youth, as in it may not be offered in the youth’s school or community. Even though some states mandate that it be integrated into school curriculum, the level of importance and effort put forth by the educator ultimately determines the level of character education one receives in school.
Not only is availability of character education a factor, but accessibility to such programming. Many schools and/or community clubs offer character education both in-school and/or after-school. Factors such as transportation or location may limit youth from participating in character education programming offered outside of school grounds or school hours, as well as organizations such as 4-H. Thus, it is very important that character education be a component of every program to educate youth, because they may not have opportunities to gain such education other places.

**4-H Youth Development Programs**

A PYD program that integrates character education is 4-H Youth Development. 4-H Youth Development is an educational setting designed to develop “leadership, citizenship and life skills among youth” in America and across the world (National 4-H Online, 2010). The design and implementation of a 4-H Youth Development Program include many participants—first and foremost, youth, as well as parents, mentors, volunteers, 4-H agents, 4-H specialists, educators, schools, and universities. Volunteers give their time to lead clubs, attend camps and help youth. Schools allow 4-H programs to be presented during instruction time. Overall, the vastness and influence of the programming is present in many different aspects.

The very first recognized 4-H Youth Development Program started in 1902 in Ohio. The initial goals of the program were to introduce new agriculture technology to youth, in order to “make the best better” (National 4-H Online, 2010). In 1914, Congress created the Cooperative Extension Service and 4-H Youth Development Programs became a part of it.

4-H Youth Development Programs began in the state of Kentucky in 1909. Kentucky’s 4-H Youth Development Programs are part of the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. In 2009, Kentucky 4-H reached 235,657 youth participants (Kentucky 4-H Online, 2010). Moreover, in 2009, 14,391 adult volunteers
gave their time towards the positive development of these youth (Kentucky Annual Youth Enrollment Report, 2009). There are 148 4-H Youth Development Agents and eight 4-H Specialists employed to deliver this programming to the state.

Kentucky 4-H Youth Development Programs follow seven core curriculum areas, including Animal Science, Communications, Family and Consumer Sciences, Health, Leadership, Natural Resources and Science, Engineering and Technology.

Kentucky 4-H has grown over the past 100 years and as participation numbers increase, the state program hopes to continue to provide quality and positive programming to the state’s youth. 4-H Youth Development programs not only impact youth in the state of Kentucky, but across the country and world. All 50 American states and around 80 countries internationally have 4-H Youth Development programming, involving “about 10 million young people, including 5 million in the United States” (National 4-H Online, 2010).

**4-H and Character Education**

As previously noted, character education comes in many forms from various sources, including community organizations. 4-H Youth Development is an example of such an organization that fosters a learning environment to promote positive character development and essentially bases its programs and activities on character education components.

Character education is about teaching youth to be caring, responsible, honest, fair, respectful and trustworthy individuals. 4-H Youth Development Programs aim at doing just that through in-school education, as well as after-school clubs, groups, camps, competitions, and activities. Teaching such character traits allows 4-H to follow their motto of “making the best better.” Not only does Kentucky 4-H Youth Development Programs aim at character education through their entire programming list but it also endorses the CHARCTER COUNTS! program under its “Leadership” core curriculum
area. Thus, promoting character education permeates all aspects of 4-H. Appendix A lists a sample of 4-H programs offered, a program description and how the program integrates character education based upon the Six Pillars of Character Education.

**Purpose and Objectives**

Character education is not a new concept or topic of discussion among society, however, it has taken on many different meanings and forms since the beginning of time. The underlying theme of such education is to influence individuals, mainly youth, on how to think, act and believe in order to be positive, contributing members of society.

Although character education has been integrated into Kentucky 4-H Youth Development Programs, the question arises as to the program’s influence on youth’s character development. To date, no study has examined the influence of character development on 4-H participation in the state of Kentucky.

The overall purpose of this research is to examine the relationship between character education and youth involvement in 4-H Youth Development Programming. The examination of character education is important because character will determine the leadership of society. What youth know about possessing positive character, as well as how youth conduct themselves, has an effect on society both now and in the future.

Character education and 4-H Youth Development have similarities, however, in order to establish if there is a connection between the two, I propose the following questions for my research:

“Does participation in Kentucky 4-H Youth Development programs influence the knowledge, attitudes and practices of positive character among youth leaders?”

“Does the length of involvement in 4-H Youth Development programs influence the knowledge, attitudes and practices of youth leaders related to character development?”
Chapter 2
Review of Literature

Background of Character Education

Character has been a topic of discussion for years. “Character education is as old as education itself. Down through history, education has had two great goals: to help people become smart and to help them become good” (Lickona, 1993, p.6). However, it is argued that members of society are not always good, and the lack of character education may be the cause of that. More so, the youth of society are not always model citizens. For example, “In fact, the conduct of United States youth during the last 20-30 years has been marked by two trends: (a) a rise in destructive behaviors, and (b) a rise in self-destructive behaviors (Whynne & Hess, 1987)” (McDaniel, 1998, para. 3) The failure to engage youth in character education may influence these negative societal implications. “These trends have helped spawn a revival of interest in character education” (McDaniel, 1998, para. 3).

Character education has also been a programming effort that builds social capital for the present and future. According to Robert Putnam, social capital is “features of social organizations, such as networks, norms, and trust that facilitate action and cooperation for mutual benefit” (Putnam, 1993, pp. 35-36). Social capital can be gained through many social networks and have many positive effects on those involved. However, in regards to youth development, Cherylynn Bassanni (2007) notes that “Social capital, the product of social relationships (such as trust, loyalty, security, self-confidence) that youths have within such groups as the family, school, and other community organizations, is believed to play a major role in the development of well-being” (p.17). Per this statement, character education enhances youth development through fostering opportunities to build relationships, and learn and practice trust, loyalty, security and self-confidence.
Character education is most often focused on youth, even though character “develops over a life span, and especially in childhood and adolescence” (Damon 1988; Berkowitz & Bier, 2004, p. 74). To define what character education consists of can be complicated, as literature notes that it can come in many different forms and thus is often difficult to gauge. “The term ‘character education’ is applied to such a wide array of educational initiatives that it is difficult to generically answer whether such a mixed set of programs ‘work’” (Berkowitz & Bier, 2004, p. 74). Research from the National Character Ethics Center indicate that character education “strengthens conscience and awareness of the right thing to do, helps kids see how choices not only affect them, but also their class, school and family, and helps kids understand ethics and morality,” among many others (NCEC Online, 2010).

Many national leaders, including past presidents of the United States, have emphasized the importance of character education. Theodore Roosevelt said “To educate a person in mind and not in morals is to educate a menace to society” (Lickona, 1993, p. 6). During Ronald Reagan’s presidency, he pushed for more character education in American schools (Hoge, 2002). President Bill Clinton also believed in character education, and demonstrated this by giving more support to the Department of Education’s character education programs (Hymowitz, 2003).

Due to the support and emphasis placed on character education, the past twenty years have seen an even larger increase in the presence and support for character education programming across the United States. For example, “Since 1994, the Department of Education has made $25 million in ‘seed money’ grants available to 28 states to develop character education programs” (Congressional Record, 2001, p. 10810). The main site for this education has been in the classroom; with many states across the country mandating their school systems integrate character education into their curriculum (Hymowitz, 2003). For example, in 1997, South Dakota legislation put
into law that character education be present in all grades in all public and private school (Mitchell, 2005). The state then partnered with the South Dakota Cooperative Extension Service and 4-H Youth Development Programs, which had a large part in implementing “CHARACTER COUNTS!” curriculum. Since then, South Dakota has become one of the leading states in character education. There are nineteen states, including South Dakota and Kentucky, which mandate character education programming (Character Education Partnership Online, 2010). Kentucky’s character education legislation has been in place since 2000.

Character education is so valued that there are several professional societies and organizations that dedicate time, money and effort to furthering this concept. In 1992, the Josephson Institute for Ethics created a resource called CHARACTER COUNTS! to bring character education to classrooms and communities (CHARACTER COUNTS! Online, 2010). Another, The Character Education Partnership, was created to “lead a national call for character” and provides curriculum and resources for character education (CEP Online, 2010). These two are among many that focus on educating our society about positive character. Another example, Boston University School of Education has a Center for the Advancement of Ethics and Character, which was created to serve, foster, educate and stimulate matters of character education (Boston University Online, 2010).

4-H and Character Education

Matthews and Riley noted that “research on character education, values education and moral reasoning has tended to focus on formal school settings” (as cited in McDaniel, 1998, para. 16). However, it is also clear that more recently community involvement, including extracurricular activities, are viable avenues of delivering character education. Thus, 4-H Youth Development Programs are included in the sector of community organizations that strive to deliver character education and development
opportunities for youth. “Positive youth development (PYD) activities range in scope from single-focus programs, such as sports teams, to national organizations, such as 4-H, that provide a variety of experiences or programs to promote PYD or youth civic engagement and contributions” (Urban et al., 2010, p. 784). Moreover, “4-H youth development programs are already doing a number of things consistent with effective approaches to character education” (McDaniel, 1998, para 27). Appendix A highlights some of the programs and character components of Kentucky 4-H programs.

In a study of youth activity involvement as a part of youth development, Urban et al. (2000) concludes that “Extracurricular activities provide a key context for youth development, and participation has been linked with positive development outcomes. Many factors contribute to adolescent development, including individual abilities, such as the ability to self regulate one’s behavior and resources in the family, school, and neighborhood/community” (p. 783).

There are several past research studies to be noted in regards to my current research. Tuft’s University and the Institute for Applied Research conducted a longitudinal study of 4-H Youth Development, looking at youth who participated in 4-H versus those that did not. Overall, the study showed that youth that participated in 4-H indicated more positive attributes over various waves of the study. “On our education measures, participants in 4-H programs had higher school grades, greater emotional engagement in school, and were more likely to see themselves as going to college” (Lerner et al., 2008, p. 12). This study supports the concept that 4-H makes a difference in the lives of youth. Another study at Hinsdale Central High School in Illinois that implemented the CHARACTER COUNTS! programming as part of its core curriculum found that “in terms of harassment, a decade of change has taken place. In 1999, 66 cases of harassment were reported. That figure is now 9” (CC! Case Study, 2010, p. 6).

Gauging more of character education within 4-H, a study by National 4-H of South
Dakota 4-H Programs tracked youth over time who participated in CHARACTER COUNTS!. Over six years of consistent character education, participating youth were surveyed and it was found that because youth were given the knowledge and formed beliefs about positive character, in turn positive results occurred such as improvement in respect for self and others (South Dakota CC! Project, 2010). However, results in years five and six started to change. “The importance of the year six survey is that respondents continue to move from positions of strongly agreed or strongly disagreed to a more neutral or questioning response. These changes were found on questions for which the opposite response is more desirable for the describe attitude or behavior” (Year 6 Summary, South Dakota CC! Project, 2010). In other words, this study helps us to understand the impact consistent character education has over a period of time. More so, it reveals that involvement in not only CHARACTER COUNTS!, but 4-H Youth Development Programs have a positive affect over time.

The Josephson Institute conducts a bi-annual study titled “Report Card on Ethics of American Youth.” The most recently released study found the following: “The 2008 Report Card included nearly 30,000 students across the country. Results showed that young people are almost unanimous in saying that ethics and character are important on both a personal level and in business, but they express very cynical attitudes about whether a person can be ethical and succeed” (Report Card on Ethics of American Youth, 2008). Studies such as these measured character knowledge, attitudes, intentions and behaviors through administering surveys to both youth and character educators.

**Theoretical Framework**

For this study, I will use a theory based on one’s knowledge as a theoretical framework. Researcher Icek Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) is based on the concepts of knowledge, beliefs, intentions and behavior (Ajzen Online, 2010). This
theory infers that in order to predict behavior, knowledge of a subject will influence one’s personal beliefs, also referred to as attitudes. Next, one’s beliefs of how society accepts and views the issues (subjective norm) and one’s own views that he/she can perform the behavior (perceived behavioral control) leads to an individual’s intentions of whether or not they consider performing the behavior. According to Ajzen (1991), the combination of knowledge, beliefs and intentions lead to predicting behavior, which in the instance of this research would be whether or not the individual conducted himself or herself with positive character. Figure 2.1 gives an adapted illustration of his theory (Ajzen, 2010).

Figure 2.1. Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behavior.

For example, let’s examine the TPB process with the character education issue of cheating. A youth learns at a young age from a teacher that it is wrong to cheat on a math test. The teacher instills the knowledge that cheating is not permitted and unacceptable in the classroom. Thus, the student forms a belief that indeed, cheating is wrong. Next, the youth will evaluate how society views the issue (subjective norm). This is where youth may have their belief reaffirmed that cheating is wrong, or may be influenced by peers that cheating is acceptable and a means to success. Based upon this step in TPB, the youth will form his/her behavioral intention—thus making a decision on whether they think cheating is right or wrong, and more so, whether they will choose to cheat or not to cheat on their next test.
As knowledge is acquired, a belief or attitude is formed. In this research, belief and attitude will be interchangeable. Researcher Parajes (1992) says that “Belief is based on evaluation and judgment; knowledge is based on objective fact” (p. 313). More so, Harvey (1986) “defined belief as an individual's representation of reality that has enough validity, truth, or credibility to guide thought and behavior” (as cited in Parajes, 1992, p.313). Examples of beliefs and attitudes towards character include whether one feels an action is right or wrong, good or bad. An example would be whether youth thought it was right or wrong to lie if it’s for a good cause. This includes not only how they feel, but also how they feel that others should think they feel (perceived behavioral norm). TPB suggests that an assumption about whether peers and society would approve of their belief, ultimately affects the intention to act upon a particular knowledge or not. For this research, I will look to see if youth participating in 4-H Youth Development Programs possess character knowledge and character attitudes/beliefs, in order to predict their intentions and behavior.

**Background of Theory of Planned Behavior**

The Theory of Planned Behavior has evolved out of revisions of other behavior predicting theories. Ajzen and researcher Martin Fishbien (1980) collaborated to create a theory called the Theory of Reasoned Action. Instead of trying to predict attitudes, this theory focuses more on predicting the behavior intentions, and the overall outcome behavior (Communication Institute for Online Scholarship, 2010). “An individual’s behavior is the consequence of a series of conscious decision-making processes, and would be best predicted by his/her behavioral intentions or expectations” (Chan, Wu, & Hung, 2010, p.1,549). This theory also integrated norms into the equation, looking at how societal views affect behavior (Ajzen & Fishbein, 1980).

In 1985, Ajzen furthered this theory by adding another component to predicting behavior- perceived behavioral controls (Ajzen Online, 2010). Now, not only do knowledge, beliefs and intentions help to predict behavior, but “people's perceptions of
their ability to perform a given behavior” have influence (Ajzen Online, 2010). Adding this component created the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Now “performance of a behavior is a joint function between the intentions and perceived behavioral control” (Ajzen, 1991, p. 185).

Sheldon Stryker developed Identity Theory, which focuses on filling societal roles. Identity theory consists of two parts: “one emphasizes the social structural sources of identity and the relations among identities, and the other focuses on internal, cognitive identity processes. The two meet at behavior that expresses identities, often interaction with others” (Stryker & Burke, 2000, p. 288). This theory relates to TPB perceived behavioral norm and how youth compare their character attitudes to that of society. Identity Theory, as well as TPB, recognizes that once knowledge is acquired and beliefs are formed, one’s views of their identity in society (i.e., among peer groups) and self-identity ultimately affect their behavioral intentions.

Although TPB has not specifically been applied to research on character education, Ajzen’s model has been used in research on topics such as the adoption of technology (Lee et al., 2010), finances (Cohen et al., 2009) and safety behaviors (Fogarty et al., 2010). TPB research has most often dealt with the topic of health (Murnaghan et al, 2010). It is appropriate to use the TPB framework for this research because it explains and predicts the process of behavior. For this research, character behavior will be examined.

**Summary**

Character education has been both acknowledged and proven through legislation and other research studies to be important and impactful on the youth of society. Character education has been found to positively influence the areas of bullying and respect, as well as youth’s beliefs, views and behaviors.
Character education delivered as positive youth development programming, such as 4-H, has been shown to have a positive impact on a national level as well. However, to be more specific, this research will review a specific 4-H program in the state of Kentucky. Although nationally results are positive, a narrower focus on a particular state will help towards improvements and open doors for future opportunities and research.

In order to do so, this research will use the conceptual framework of Icke Ajzen’s Theory of Planned Behavior. The theory infers that the knowledge one has about a subject will interact or connect with their beliefs and attitudes about the subject, and thus leading to behavior intentions and actions based upon these beliefs and attitudes. This is an appropriate model for my research because gauging 4-H youth’s knowledge and attitudes towards character will give a better indication of character behavior.

Character education in the lives of youth makes a difference. Character education can be offered in many different contexts, such as school, the home and community. The focus of this character education research will be in the context of 4-H Youth Development Programs and will look to see if 4-H involvement has an effect on youth’s knowledge, attitudes, intentions and behavior when it comes to character.
Chapter 3

Materials and Methods

The purpose of this research is to explore character education within the context of youth development. More so, this study will focus on answering the following questions:

“Does participation in Kentucky 4-H Youth Development programs influence the knowledge, attitudes and practices of positive character among youth leaders?”

“Does the length of involvement in 4-H Youth Development programs influence the knowledge, attitudes and practices of youth leaders related to character development?”

For the context of this research, knowledge is defined as “justified true belief, or true opinion combined with reason” (Hilpinen, 1970, p. 109). Thus, character knowledge would be the justified true beliefs about character, both positive and negative, gained through sources such as school, the home, family, extracurricular organizations or religion. Character knowledge would be what youth know about the meaning and behavioral applications of honesty, caring, trustworthiness, respect, responsibility and fairness. For complete definitions, please refer to Tables 3.1 and 3.2 for the key terms used in this research. Table 3.1 lists the conceptual definitions of key terms in this research, which include more general definitions based upon literature. Table 3.2 lists a more applicable set of definitions as it applies to this research.
### Table 3.1

**Conceptual Definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>CONCEPTUAL Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>&quot;The complex set of psychological characteristics that enable an individual to act as a moral agent&quot; (Berkowitz &amp; Bier)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character Education</td>
<td>&quot;Efforts to help young people develop good character, which includes knowing about, caring about and acting upon core ethical values such as fairness, honesty, compassion, responsibility and respect for self and others&quot; (CEP)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>&quot;...Justified true belief, or true opinion combined with reason&quot; (Hilpinen, 1970, p.109)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes/Beliefs</td>
<td>&quot;...an individual's representation of reality that has enough validity, truth, or credibility to guide thought and behavior.&quot;(Harvey, 1986)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentions</td>
<td>&quot;A precursor to a behavioral act&quot; (Tankersly &amp; Lambert)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>An action stemming from knowledge and attitudes</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 3.2

**Operational Definitions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Term</th>
<th>OPERATIONAL Definition</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Character</td>
<td>Characteristics dealing with decision-making, ethics and values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Character Education</td>
<td>Methods and efforts of educating youth about positive characteristics, morals and ethics through various settings</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>To be informed about the difference between positive and negative character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitudes/Beliefs</td>
<td>They way a youth feels about positive and negative character</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Intentions</td>
<td>A combination of knowledge and attitudes; a frame of mind the youth holds about how to act and/or react in character situations/opportunities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Behavior</td>
<td>An act of character, or lack thereof; acting upon knowledge, attitudes and intentions</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Research Design

This study collected quantitative data, thus using numbers to describe conclusions. “A quantitative researcher attempts to fragment and delimit phenomena into measurable or common categories that can be applied to all of the subjects or wider and similar situations” (Goalafshani, 2003, p. 598). A quantitative study was decided upon for this research because of the vast number of participants in Kentucky 4-H. Description of results and conclusions could be more organized in a quantitative method and delivered more precisely. The methodology for this project was a three-fold approach and involved two pilot studies to develop and refine the survey instrument and then the main study that is an initial investigation into the research questions at hand.

Although there are 235,657 youth involved in Kentucky 4-H programs, the audience for this survey was narrowed down to a specific group of 4-H youth: identified youth leaders. The group surveyed in the main study were youth participants age 13-19 at the 2010 Kentucky 4-H Teen Conference, who were chosen as the survey population because they are identified as some of the top youth leaders in 4-H programs from across the state.

Pilot Study One

In order to get a better understanding of youth views of character education before conducting my research survey, I led a group at the 2009 Kentucky 4-H Issues Conference. The 4-H Issues Conference brings together Kentucky’s top youth leaders to research, discuss and design action plans about issues that are relevant to their generation. An action group titled “Character and Ethics” was composed of 15 youth who have been identified as leaders in their community. The students were incoming sophomores and juniors in high school and came from across the state.
Student participants in this action group were to research the topic of “Character and Ethics” before coming to the conference. There was dialogue among the youth about issues they see as important within this topic. The issues were narrowed down and the students came up with an action plan on how to tackle the issue within their community.

My role in this group was to guide dialogue and action plans, as well as to observe the youth in action. I was able to administer a pilot survey to the youth and gained even more knowledge on their views of character. Their responses and views helped me to further develop my research survey. See Appendix B for the lesson plans, lists and surveys from this pilot group.

Survey Development

Based upon input from the first pilot group I proceeded to refine the survey instrument for this research study. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix C. The goal of a survey is “to learn the characteristics of the target population” (Fowler, 2008, p. 11). The survey was designed by the researcher to fit the objectives of the research and examine character education through the lens of the Theory of Planned Behavior.

Hence, the survey was developed to gauge youth’s character knowledge, beliefs, intentions and practices of character, as well as include socio-demographic information about survey participants. It included questions that measured youth responses in these five categories.

The survey questions were developed from the initial pilot study and patterned from Josephson’s Institute’s Report Card on Ethics of American Youth (Josephson Institute, 2010). Remaining questions were created by the researcher to tap the character constructs. The final instrument included four questions gauging knowledge,
two questions in the area of beliefs/attitudes, one question about intentions and one question about practices. Eight socio-demographic questions were also included.

The survey instrument had face validity, in that youth leaders helped create and pilot the survey two different times before it was administered to a separate group of youth leaders. Strength and possibly more honest answers can be found in a survey created by youth for youth. Also, in order to more accurately gauge the character knowledge, beliefs/attitudes, intentions and practices of youth, the CHARACTER COUNTS! Six Pillars of Character were integrated into several of the survey questions. This was done so that character traits could be more easily identified within youth respondents and then assessed.

Construct validity was part of this research in that the Six Pillars of Character, as established as key character attributes by the Josephson Institute for Ethics, were compared to 4-H Programs to look for relationships between the two (Appendix A). These pillars were not only integrated in the survey for this research, but were originally integrated into the Report Card on Ethics of American Youth, which surveys more than 40,000 youth. More so, the theoretical framework for this research, the Theory of Planned Behavior, predicts knowledge, beliefs/attitudes, intentions and behaviors, thus the survey questions specifically gauged these four areas.

Questions from the survey for this research were patterned after several different sources, and this presents some reliability. It would have been ideal to use the exact wording or entire instrument from these sources to strengthen reliability. However, I did not in this instance due to the time frame available for survey administration. If this research were conducted again, I would include exact survey questions from more reliable survey instruments (such as Report Card on Ethics of American Youth, 4-H and CHARACTER COUNTS! studies).
As the Theory of Planned Behavior explains, it is one’s knowledge that begins the behavior process. Thus, it was important to survey not only the amount and type of knowledge youth felt they had about positive character, but more so the sources of this knowledge. Knowledge questions assessed where 4-H youth participants had learned about positive character. Question 3 described what CHARACTER COUNTS! is and ask youth if they’ve ever participated in a CC! program. This was a self-designed question, tailored to Kentucky 4-H since CC! is a program within its core curriculum areas. Question 4 further assessed knowledge sources by asking youth if they have ever been a part of a character education class or club. Question 8 asked if youth are involved in any other “clubs, teams, groups or organizations besides 4-H.” Both of these questions were self-designed and gauge other possible sources of character knowledge among youth.

Next in the process of TPB is the beliefs/attitudes one forms from knowledge, thus it was important to gauge youth’s personal beliefs/attitudes on certain value-based statements. It was also important for the questions to be worded in a way that youth were answering what they believed, and not what others believed. Beliefs/attitudes questions assessed how youth felt about certain character issues. Question 1 listed eight statements concerning character and youth were to indicate whether they agreed or disagreed. Several of these statements were patterned from the Report Card on Ethics of American Youth (Josephson Institute, 2010). The statements gauged honesty, respect, and citizenship, among others. Question 9 was self-designed, and asked youth if they felt that 4-H programs had taught them about being a “better person, citizen, friend and/or leader.”

Once knowledge is acquired and beliefs are formed, one’s behavioral intentions arise. A question assessing character intentions was Question 2, which listed 17 characteristics and asked youth to indicate the characteristics that they look for in
choosing friends. This question was designed from the pilot study, when the youth indicated through discussion that an individual’s character is often reflected by the people they associate with. Basically, youth indicated that the level of character one has is shown through the characteristics of their friends.

The end result of TPB is the behavior itself. A question assessing character practice was self-designed Question 6, which asked youth how often they felt they practiced good character. This question allowed youth to reflect on their own character, and the reliability of this question is strong.

Remaining survey questions included required socio-demographic information, including gender, race, age, involvement in 4-H programs, and frequency of attendance to the conference. These questions allowed a better reflection of who the youth survey respondents are. Several open-ended questions were also included to gain additional comments and thoughts on youth’s views of character education, as well as Kentucky 4-H programs.

The survey consisted of 16 questions. The questions were designed to be as clear as possible for youth age 13-19 to understand. The majority of the questions asked the participant to check “YES” or “NO.” Several questions had fill-in-the-blank options as well.

Overall, the survey questions were designed to enable this study to generate data appropriate to answering the research questions. Once the survey was finalized, approval from the University of Kentucky’s Office of Research Integrity and Internal Review Board was sought. Approval was received and documentation can be found in Appendix D. In order to survey the youth, a signed parental consent form was required and youth were required to receive an assent statement as well.

While this research involves the knowledge, attitudes, intentions and behavior practices of the participating 4-H respondents, the key variable for my second research
question is that of length of 4-H involvement. Within my research survey, question 10 asked “How long have you been a member of 4-H?” Respondents had several options of time frames to choose from for their response. This key variable was compared to other survey questions about knowledge, attitudes, intentions and behaviors in order to test my hypotheses about the influence of participation in 4-H programs on character development.

I decided to use the length of 4-H involvement as the key variable because of the implications the results could have. Youth have the opportunity to become a member of 4-H Youth Development Programs as early as five years old, which is called the “Cloverbud” program. However, at this age youth cannot compete in 4-H events or complete the 4-H projects and programs that count towards awards and honors. However, at age nine, youth can officially become enrolled members of 4-H and participate in programs in Kentucky 4-H’s seven core curriculum areas. Youth can be a member of 4-H until age 19 and therefore they can be involved in 4-H programs for at least 10 years, and possibly longer. This key variable helped determine whether the longer one is involved in 4-H leads to a higher level of character development or if length of participation in 4-H is even a factor in character development.

**Pilot Study Two-Survey Pretest**

The survey was pre-tested with eight 4-H youth within the context of a 4-H event. Their responses are not part of the data presented in this study. After the youth were finished with the survey, I led a discussion about whether they understood the content of the questions and their perspectives on the design of the overall survey. Based on this pre-test, I made changes in the survey to produce its final form.

**Main Study-Data Collection**

The finalized cross-sectional survey used in this research was administered at the June 2010 Kentucky 4-H Teen Conference concurrently to students at the end of a morning
session on the University of Kentucky’s campus. The sample for this research is approximately 20% of the 546 youth who were in attendance at the conference. This was due to lack of parental consent. In addition, in compliance with IRB regulations, youth had the option to opt out of participating in the survey at the time of administration, and sixty youth did so. Thus, the total survey sample was 120 respondents.

Trained personnel, including the primary investigator, gave participants an informative overview of the purpose of the survey (Appendix E) and then administered them. Boxes were placed at each location for completed surveys to be dropped.

This method of data collection was chosen because it was the most convenient for a group of this size, and an in-person survey often has better response results as compared to a telephone or mailed survey. Advantages of group survey administration include: “Cooperation rates are generally higher. It provides a chance to explain the study and answer questions about questionnaire (in contrast to mail surveys) [and] Generally, the unit costs are low” (Fowler, 2008, p. 82).

**Data Analysis**

The method of analysis used to answer the research questions for this study included descriptive analyses and a Chi-Square test. A chi-square is a “quantitative measure used to determine whether a relationship exists between two categorical variables” (Berman, 2007, p. 146). A Chi-Square is a means of comparison to see if the responses to survey questions are related and seemed to be an appropriate test to generate data to answer my research questions. The Chi-Square analysis was conducted using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) software.

**Limitations**

- The results to this research are limited to youth involved in the Kentucky 4-H Program.
- The study will only deal with responses of youth leaders attending the 2010 Kentucky 4-H Teen Conference.
• The study will only deal with responses of youth age 13-19, as this is the required age to attend the 4-H Teen Conference.
• All youth delegates to the 2010 Conference were not surveyed. Parental consent was required to participate and of those who did, not all youth provided their assent to participate during the survey administration.
Chapter 4
Results and Discussion

Description of Sample

The target population of this survey was youth delegates of the 2010 Kentucky 4-H Teen Conference (N=546). This population was chosen because attendees are a representation of the top youth leaders in the state, as well as some of the most active 4-H participants in the state. Kentucky 4-H Teen Conference is an annual event held on the campus of the University of Kentucky. It is open to students entering their freshman year of high school to students who have just graduated high school, within the ages of 13-19. The four-day conference allows students to experience a taste of college life while becoming more involved in Kentucky 4-H Youth Development Programs.

This study included youth participants whose parent/guardian signed a consent form to allow them to participate in the survey (N=180) (Appendix D). Consent to participate was indicated by a red dot on the youth delegate’s Conference nametag. Delegates are to wear their nametags at all times. From this group who had parental consent, actual survey results include students who gave assent by participating in the study at the survey site (N=120). Table 4.1 describes the characteristics of the youth survey participants.

From Table 4.1, data shows that the most common youth survey respondent is a white female, age 15 or older, who is a first-time attendee to 4-H Teen Conference. The typical respondent is also most involved in 4-H Camp, Speeches/Demonstrations and 4-H Teen Council. More so, youth survey respondents are almost evenly split in regards to their length of 4-H membership, including less than 1/1-5 years and 6-10 years/more than 10 years. Appendix F includes Tables 4.2 through 4.6, which lists open-ended responses that will also describe the demographic of our survey population, including
who youth feel that they lead and other character education and extracurricular organizations in which they are involved with.

**Table 4.1**

Demographic Information of Youth Respondents

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variables</th>
<th>Number of Respondents</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q14: Gender</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>38 (32.3)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>79 (66.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Response</td>
<td>3 (.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q15: Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>13</td>
<td>4 (3.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>14</td>
<td>24 (20.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>15</td>
<td>33 (28.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>16</td>
<td>25 (21.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>17</td>
<td>22 (18.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>7 (5.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>3 (2.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Response</td>
<td>2 (1.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q16: Ethnic Origin</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>106 (88.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Indian/Alaska Native</td>
<td>3 (2.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Black/African America</td>
<td>3 (2.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Hispanic/Latino</td>
<td>1 (.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Asian</td>
<td>1 (.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>1 (.9)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-Response</td>
<td>5 (4.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q10: Length of Involvement in 4-H</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Less than 1 year/1-5 years</td>
<td>56 (46.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6-10 years/More than 10 years</td>
<td>64 (53.4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Q12: 4-H Programs Participated In</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-H Camp</td>
<td>85 (70.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Speech/Demonstration</td>
<td>61 (50.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-H Teen Council</td>
<td>53 (44.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sewing</td>
<td>32 (26.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Teen Summit</td>
<td>30 (25.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Health Rocks</td>
<td>29 (24.1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock</td>
<td>24 (20.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Country Ham</td>
<td>18 (15.0)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Issues Conference</td>
<td>16 (12.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>7 (5.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Land Judging</td>
<td>3 (2.5)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.1 (continued)

| Q11: Number of Years Attending 4-H Teen Conference | 80 (66.6) |
| First year | 25 (20.8) |
| 2 | 7 (5.8) |
| 3 | 5 (4.2) |
| 4 | 3 (2.5) |
| Q7: Youth Considers Self a Leader | 96 (80.0) |
| YES | 18 (15.0) |
| NO | |

Note: n=120, *Numbers in parenthesis indicate percent (%)

Expectations

When considering my area of research, expectations were held by the researcher that the results of this research would be positive, as many positive programs and experiences contributed to 4-H Youth Development Programs in Kentucky have been witnessed. It is often a general assumption that if a program focuses on youth development, it must be effective, great and beneficial. However, unless evaluated, how does one know if programming is meeting goals and really making an impact on its participants?

Survey Responses

Overall, data from survey responses met general expectations and indicated that Kentucky 4-H programs have influenced the character knowledge, beliefs/attitudes, intentions and practices of participants. Appendix F includes Tables 4.7 through 4.10, which display numerical data for survey questions.

In the area of character knowledge, youth indicated that they had rarely been involved in CHARACTER COUNTS! within Kentucky 4-H and more so, had not been involved in many character education classes or clubs in other local settings (community, schools, religious groups and the home). However, 95% of youth respondents indicated that they had developed character knowledge from 4-H. Youth
responding to the survey are very involved in other “clubs, teams, groups or organizations besides 4-H,” which could influence their character knowledge. The most common youth involvement outside of 4-H included arts programs (such as band and theatre), sports (basketball, cheerleading, football), honor societies (BETA, National Junior Honor Society, Key Club) and specialized clubs (Journalism, Yearbook Staff, Chess Club, and Science Club).

Youth respondents strongly indicated that it’s important to them to have good character, care about and help others, and be a good friend and citizen. They also strongly valued being fair, respecting self and avoid cheating on tests. However, 30.5% of youth indicated that they felt it was okay to lie if it was for a good cause, which was somewhat surprising. This question acknowledges that lying compromises positive character, yet some youth feel that it is permissible based on their value judgment of what a “good cause” consists of.

When youth were asked whether they believed that 4-H programs had taught them about being a better person, citizen, friend and/or leader, 88.3% positively indicated that this was their belief. More so, youth were given the opportunity to give examples of what their answer meant. Out of their responses, youth most often indicated that 4-H had influenced their knowledge of character and character practices. Since knowledge and practice are the first and last steps in TPB, this demonstrates strong implications for the benefit of 4-H to overall character development. Table 4.10 lists examples of responses.
Table 4.10

Youth Responses of How 4-H Youth Development Programs Have Influenced Them*

**Knowledge**
- “To learn and teach respect of all people.”
- “It has helped to teach me about responsibility in our community.”
- “4-H has helped me with the choices I make.”
- “gave me guidance of how to be a leader.”
- “It has taught me responsibility and to believe in myself.”
- “4-H taught me to be a leader at camp and become a good character for children.”
- “I have learned many life skills through 4-H.”
- “It has helped me become who I am today. It has had great influence on my life, teaching me qualities of leadership and responsibility.”
- “helped me to develop better social skills.”
- “taught me to trust others.”
- “4-H has many teambuilding activities that not only teach you how to work with others, but how to keep your integrity.”
- “It has helped me develop leadership skills that make my best better.”
- “Social skills.”
- “It has taught me to respect others for who they are, not what or where they come from.”
- “The people helping (with 4-H) are good examples. They show me what a good person is.”
- “inspired leadership opportunities.”
- “Taught me values in life and instilled a love for helping others.”
- “It has taught me to work well with others and be a better leader.”

**Practice**
- “Too many to count!”
- “It has helped me to become a better person and leader.”
- “4-H has helped me build relationships and friendships with many people and has made me overcome my shyness.”
- “It has improved the way I act in public and how outgoing I am. I’m also no longer afraid to speak in public.”
- “4-H helped me be a better person.”
- “becoming responsible and a better leader.”
- “It helped me transform from a shy tomboy to a more confident young lady.”
- “It has helped me accept others and myself.”
- “It has made me more responsible and respectful.”
- “leading and being a good influence on younger children.”
- “It’s helped me grow as a person.”
- “4-H has helped me become more involved in my community and make a difference in the lives of others.”
- “It’s helped me become a stronger leader.”

*From survey question 9B: “Do you feel that 4-H programs have taught you about being a better person, citizen, friend and/or leader? If yes, can you think of an example of how 4-H has helped you?”
These responses reflect core themes of the CHARACTER COUNTS! Six Pillars of Character. Youth responded that 4-H has “helped teach me about responsibility in our community,” “taught me respect for others,” and “made me a better person and citizen.” Youth’s responses demonstrated that they had gained character knowledge (“4-H taught me to trust others”), character beliefs (“It helped me to be more honest”), character intentions (“It has helped me be a better person and want to be kind to others”) and positive character behavior (“It’s helped me to be a better leader”). These responses indicate that in the lives of these Kentucky youth, 4-H has made an impact. Through the programs Kentucky 4-H offers, respect has been formed, leaders have been grown, social skills developed, and lives changed.

When surveyed about the characteristics youth look for in choosing friends, responses at 90% and higher included “honest, caring, fair, responsible, respectful, trustworthy and funny.” Surprisingly, the characteristics of “pretty/handsome, athletic and popular” were the three lowest indicated by youth. Such results indicate that youth identify and value positive character traits in those they associate and share life with. If association is any indication of behavior, then youth value positive character behavior as well. When asked, 68% of youth responded that they practice good character “all of the time.”

As referenced earlier, character education programs have been inferred to build social capital among youth, which includes “social relationships (such as trust, loyalty, security, self-confidence) that youths have within such groups as the family, school, and other community organizations” (Bassani, 2007, p. 17). Such capital influences the overall well-being of a youth’s development as a leader, program participant and overall, contributing member to society. Through survey responses, it is evident that such positive social relationships have formed for youth involved in Kentucky 4-H programs. Within 4-H, youth have built relationships with both peers and adults (“4-H has helped
me build relationships and friendships with many people and has made me overcome my shyness”) and have increased their self-confidence (“It helped me transform from a shy tomboy to a more confident young lady”). Thus, Kentucky 4-H is a source of social capital within our communities across the state.

**Research Question #1**

The first research question asked whether 4-H Youth Development programs made a difference in youth’s character knowledge, beliefs and intentions. In order to answer this question, the key variable was youth’s responses to Question #9: “Do you feel that 4-H programs have taught you about being a better person, citizen, friend and/or leader?” Eighty-eight percent of youth responding indicated that yes, 4-H had done so. This result is confirmed by the youth’s responses to the open-ended portion of this question: “If yes, can you think of an example of how 4-H has helped you?” According to Table 4.10, youth indicated that 4-H had not only influenced their character, but changed their lives. One student responded that 4-H had helped he/she be a better person. Another youth stated that being involved in 4-H helped her turn from a shy tomboy into a confident young lady.

**Research Question #2**

Some survey questions were targeted at the different components of Ajzen’s TPB and the key variable used to analyze these components is the length of time a youth respondent has been involved in 4-H Youth Development Programs. On the survey, youth had four options to respond to in regards to their length of involvement: less than 1 year, 1-5 years, 6-10 years, more than 10 years. However, for purposes of better analyzing data, the options were collapsed into two options: 1-5 years, and 6 or more years. The data showed that youth were mostly evenly split on the number of years they had been involved in the programs, with 6 or more years indicated by 53.4% of respondents as seen in Table 4.1.
**Chi Square Analysis**

In order to analyze whether length of involvement in 4-H Youth Development programs affect youth’s knowledge, beliefs, intentions, and behaviors in regards to character education, a chi-square analysis was completed.

A Chi-square test was run on the 16 survey questions against the key variable of length of involvement, which indicated the key variable. Sets of crosstabs were returned and within the Chi-Square Test Table, any “Asymp. Sig (2-sided)” that was less than .05 was significant. Anything above meant that the results were distributed evenly. After reviewing the crosstabs, there were very few numbers in that range, leaving very little significant data received from the Chi-Square test. Thus, this indicates that there is not a significant distinction between the two groups across these variables. Hence the length of time involved in 4-H does not differentiate the knowledge, attitudes and intentions/practices of character among these youth. See Table 4.11 for results.

In Table 4.11, data marked with an asterisk (*) was noted significant by the Chi-Square test. The significance implies that results differed from expected random variation (chance).
## Table 4.11

**Chi Square Analysis with Percentage Responding YES**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>5 or less years 4-H Involvement (n=56)</th>
<th>6 or more years 4-H Involvement (n=64)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>KNOWLEDGE:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q3 (Character Counts! Involvement)*</td>
<td>5.4</td>
<td>8.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4 (Involvement in any character education)</td>
<td>16.4</td>
<td>20.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5A (Knowledge from Home/Family)</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>92.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5B (Knowledge from School)</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>90.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5C (Knowledge from 4-H)</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>96.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5D (Knowledge from Youth Friends)</td>
<td>92.9</td>
<td>89.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5E (Knowledge from Adult Friends/Leader)</td>
<td>89.3</td>
<td>92.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5F (Knowledge from Religious Groups)</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>82.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5G (Knowledge from Other Clubs/Sports)</td>
<td>83.9</td>
<td>88.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5H (Active in any other groups besides 4-H)</td>
<td>92.6</td>
<td>93.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>BELIEFS/ATTITUDES:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1A (Important to have good character)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1B (Important to care for and help others)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1C (Important to be a good friend)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1D (Important to be a good citizen)</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1E (It is wrong to cheat on a test)</td>
<td>98.2</td>
<td>96.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1F (It’s okay to lie if for a good cause)</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>32.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1G (I try to be fair in all situations)*</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>92.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1H (Important to respect yourself and others)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q7 (Do you consider yourself a leader?)</td>
<td>76.8</td>
<td>82.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9 (Do you feel 4-H programs have taught you about being a better person, citizen, friend and/or leader?) *</td>
<td>78.6</td>
<td>96.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>INTENTIONS:</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Characteristics desired in choosing friends:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2A (Honest)</td>
<td>N/A</td>
<td>N/A</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2B (Caring)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>96.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2C (Ethical)</td>
<td>85.5</td>
<td>81.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2D (Smart)</td>
<td>80.4</td>
<td>73.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2E (Fair)</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>95.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2F (Daring)</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>59.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2G (Popular)</td>
<td>28.6</td>
<td>17.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2H (Athletic)</td>
<td>32.1</td>
<td>28.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2I (Outspoken)</td>
<td>62.5</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2J (Responsible)</td>
<td>94.6</td>
<td>93.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2K (Funny)</td>
<td>91.1</td>
<td>90.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2L (Talented)</td>
<td>64.3</td>
<td>65.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2M (Respectful)</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>89.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2N (Risk-taker)</td>
<td>46.4</td>
<td>53.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 4.11 (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Value 1</th>
<th>Value 2</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q2O (Leader)</td>
<td>71.4</td>
<td>64.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2P (Pretty/Handsome)</td>
<td>34.5</td>
<td>32.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2Q (Trustworthy)</td>
<td>96.4</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BEHAVIOR/PRACTICE:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q6 (How often you practice good character)*</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>87.5</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*p<.05 (Data Significant)

The first significant result was for Question 3, which surveyed students about their involvement in CHARACTER COUNTS! programming. Overall, few youth indicated that they had been involved in CHARACTER COUNTS!. However, of the youth who responded that they had been involved in CHARACTER COUNTS!, these were also those that been involved in Kentucky 4-H programs for six or more years. This result could be attributed to these youth having more opportunities to be involved in such a program since they had also been involved in 4-H longer than other youth. Overall though, this significance reflects that CHARACTER COUNTS! may not be offered as frequently as assumed within Kentucky 4-H, or may not be as strong of a program compared to other curriculum areas.

The next significant result was question 1G, which asked students to respond yes or no to the statement that “I try to be fair in all situations.” This character concept was valued by both groups of youth, but 100% of youth in the 5 years or less category responded yes to the statement. Youth in the 6 or more years category responded yes at only 92.2% though, thus identifying a significant difference between the two groups. This suggests that fairness is a characteristic valued by youth across the board, however those involved in 4-H programs for the least amount of time value it more. This raises the question of whether fairness is a concept that becomes more nuanced as youth
mature and encounter more situations where fairness is more difficult to assess or determine.

The third significant results was question 9, which asked youth if they felt that 4-H had taught them about being a better person, citizen, friend and/or leader. Of youth who have been involved in 4-H programs six or more years, 96.9% responded that yes, 4-H had influenced them in such a way. However, 78.6% of youth involved five years or less indicated yes as well. Thus, a significantly higher number of the youth that have been involved the longest indicated 4-H had influenced this aspect of character development.

The last significant result was question 6, which asked youth how often they felt they practiced good character. Youth had four options to respond to, including all the time, most of the time, some of the time and never. For the sake of better managing data, the options of all the time, most of the time and some of the time were categorized as “yes.” The fourth option, never, represented no. There was a significant difference between the youth’s responses and the length of time they’ve been involved in 4-H. Youth who had been involved in 4-H programs five years or less (n=56) responded with a 100% yes. However, 87.5% of youth who had been involved for six or more years (n=64) responded yes. Theoretically it is assumed that the longer youth are involved and exposed to the character building programs, the more likely they are to practice positive character. This result challenges this perspective though and raises the question as to whether the difference reflects how these youth define “practicing” good character and what “good character” means to them.

To take the research a step further, another analysis was run to see if gender of youth participants impacted the knowledge, attitudes and intentions/practices of youth character. As formerly noted, Carol Gilligan’s Feminist Theory believes that gender influences character development and character behavior (Robbins et. al., 2006). Youth
gender was compared to specific survey questions in which results may have been surprising or significant to this research. For example, when asked whether or not it was acceptable to lie if it was for a good cause, 57.9% of male youth indicated yes but a significantly higher number of female students (75.3%) indicated that it was suitable to do so. When comparing the characteristics youth look for in friends, males had higher proportion of yes responses on all characteristics except for caring, responsible and funny. This suggests that female 4-H participants value quite different characteristics in their friends than do their male counterparts and therefore, gender is a factor in friendship choices that overrides factors associated with personal character. Table 4.12 displays further results.

Table 4.12

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>MALE youth (n=38)</th>
<th>FEMALE youth (n=79)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q1F: It’s okay to lie if it’s for a good cause.</td>
<td>57.9</td>
<td>75.3</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2: Of the following characteristics, please check YES or NO if you look for these in choosing friends:</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2A (Honest)</td>
<td>100</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2B (Caring)*</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>100</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2C (Ethical)</td>
<td>89.5</td>
<td>80.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2D (Smart)</td>
<td>86.8</td>
<td>70.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2E (Fair)</td>
<td>97.4</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2F (Daring)</td>
<td>60.5</td>
<td>49.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2G (Popular)</td>
<td>31.6</td>
<td>17.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2H (Athletic)*</td>
<td>44.7</td>
<td>22.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2I (Outspoken)</td>
<td>63.2</td>
<td>54.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2J (Responsible)</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>94.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2K (Funny)</td>
<td>86.8</td>
<td>92.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2L (Talented)</td>
<td>71.1</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2M (Respectful)</td>
<td>94.7</td>
<td>91.1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2N (Risk-Taker)</td>
<td>55.3</td>
<td>45.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2O (Leader)</td>
<td>68.4</td>
<td>65.8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2P (Pretty/Handsome)*</td>
<td>48.6</td>
<td>26.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2Q (Trustworthy)</td>
<td>92.1</td>
<td>91.1</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Significance was found within Question 2, parts B, H, and P. Question 2 evaluated the types of characteristics youth look for when choosing friends. Part B was the characteristic of caring. One-hundred percent of female youth responded yes to this characteristic and 94.7% of male youth responded yes, indicating that being a caring person is more desirable for women when looking for friends. The character trait of caring is one of the Six Pillars of Character within the CHARACTER COUNTS! curriculum and a response that youth feel this strongly about is very encouraging.

Part H of this question was the characteristic of being athletic. Females responded that they desired this quality in a friend at 22.8% (n=79). Males responded yes to this characteristic at 44.7% (n=38). Overall, both male and female youth valued this characteristic in choosing friends, but males valued it significantly more.

Part P was the characteristic of pretty/handsome. In a culture where youth, and especially teens, are influenced by media and society that looks and body image are the keys to success, it was surprising that both males and females responding to the survey had lower levels of indicating that they did value this characteristic in choosing friends. Males responded yes at 48.6% and females at an even lower response rate at 26.6%. This result implies that youth may really look for more character-based traits when choosing friends.

Overall, although the male sample size was smaller than females, males indicated a more consistent “yes” response in regards characteristics they look for in friends than females. As Table 4.12 shows, male youth had a higher percentage of yes responses in all areas except caring, responsible and funny.
Summary

Overall, this research leads to findings based on knowledge, beliefs/attitudes, intentions and practices of positive character among youth. Table 4.13 describes the objectives of the research and the types of results that were found. Based on responses youth gave on a survey for this research, it was found that Kentucky 4-H programs do influence the character knowledge, beliefs/attitudes, intentions and practices of those involved. More so, it doesn’t matter the length of involvement youth have been in 4-H to see results that 4-H is making an impact. Over 90 percent of youth in both length of involvement categories indicated that they had gained character knowledge by being involved in 4-H programs. Furthermore, over 75 percent of youth in both length of involvement categories responded that 4-H programs had made them a better person, citizen, friend and/or leader. An additional aspect to the study was added to see if gender was a factor in any of the survey responses and while they were more females responding overall, both males and females valued character education. Research found that more females agreed that it’s okay to lie for a good cause than males, but that males places higher value on character-based characteristics in choosing friends.
**Table 4.13**

**Summary of Results to Research Questions**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question #1:</th>
<th>“Do Kentucky 4-H Youth Development programs influence the knowledge, attitudes and practices of positive character among youth leaders?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Findings:**         | Knowledge: According to question Q5C, 95% of youth indicated that they had developed knowledge about character from 4-H. Question 3 showed that 87.5% of youth responded that they had not been a part of CHARACTER COUNTS!  
Attitudes/Practices: Question 9 indicated that 88.3% of youth responding felt that 4-H programs had taught them about being a better person, citizen, friend and/or leader. More so, Table 4.10 listed positive youth responses of how 4-H programs have influenced their attitudes about character and character practices, as well as opportunities to practice these. For example, 4-H has “helped to teach me about responsibility in our community,” “made me a better person and citizen,” and “taught me values in life and instilled a love of helping others,” among others. |
| **Conclusion:**       | Yes, 4-H Youth Development programs do influence the knowledge, attitudes and practices of positive character among youth leaders. |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Research Question #2:</th>
<th>“Does the length of involvement in 4-H Youth Development programs influence the knowledge, attitudes and practices of youth leaders related to character development?”</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| **Findings:**         | The Chi-Square analysis indicated that youth who had been involved six or more years in 4-H programs had more often participated in CHARACTER COUNTS! programming (Q3) and were more likely to indicate that they felt that 4-H had taught them about being a better person, citizen, friend and/or leader (Q9).  
More so, the analysis showed that youth who have been involved five years or less indicated that they practiced good character more often (Q6) and are more likely to be fair in all situations (Q1G).  
Both groups, no matter the length of involvement, had similar response rates for all other questions gauging character knowledge, beliefs/attitudes, intentions and practices. |

Table 4.13 (continued)

| Conclusion: | Overall, length of 4-H involvement does not significantly affect the amount of character knowledge youth gain, attitudes of character development youth hold or the likelihood that youth are going to practice good character. |


Chapter 5
Conclusions

This research project focused on character education and the relationship between this concept and 4-H Youth Development programs. Character education helps youth become better individuals, citizens and leaders, as they are taught about positive character, including the areas of responsibility, trustworthiness, respect, caring, fairness and citizenship. Educating youth on positive character is not only mandated in formal education settings, such as schools, but needs to be reinforced through the home and community organizations and clubs, such as 4-H Youth Development.

4-H Youth Development is a growing organization that reaches more than 10 million youth around the world. The goal of 4-H programs is to develop leadership, citizenship and life skills among youth and does so through programs, clubs, camps, competitions, projects and many other activities. Character education is very important to 4-H, as it endorses the national CHARACTER COUNTS! curriculum, as well as encourage positive character education through all its programming.

A lot of time, money and effort is invested into 4-H Youth Development programs and it would not be able to reach as many youth without this capital. 4-H programs keep growing and in order to be successful in continuing to foster a positive environment and programming for youth, it is important to know that the current programming and strategies are effective for now and the future.

Thus this research focused on the following questions:

“Do Kentucky 4-H Youth Development programs influence the knowledge, attitudes and practices of positive character among youth leaders?”

“Does the length of involvement in 4-H Youth Development programs influence the knowledge, attitudes and practices of youth leaders related to character development?”
In order to better answer the research questions, the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB), created by Icek Ajzen, was used as the theoretical framework guiding this project. TPB posits that behavior is a process, beginning with knowledge about a subject. The knowledge one has leads to his/her attitudes and beliefs about the subject. The attitudes and beliefs one holds will ultimately determine their intentions for behavior and if the opportunity is there, will predict their behavior. Thus, within this research, the character knowledge, attitudes, intentions and even behavior practices were gauged in order to better understand youth’s overall views of character education, but more so, if and how 4-H has played into the process.

A survey was designed and distributed to 4-H youth, age 13-19, in order to learn more about their knowledge, attitudes, intentions and practices of character education. The survey was 16 questions long and was given at one place and time to a group of youth attending an annual state 4-H conference. One-hundred-and-twenty youth completed surveys for this research project.

The data from the survey showed that youth feel that 4-H has contributed to their knowledge of positive character, as well as given them opportunities to practice positive character. More so, data showed that the length of 4-H involvement does not affect the amount of knowledge one has about character, nor their beliefs, intentions and practices of character.

**Conceptual Implications**

Using the TPB model, this research was able to confirm the links between knowledge, attitudes, intentions and behavior. Youth indicated that they had received character knowledge from 4-H and thus formed positive beliefs and attitudes about doing so. Thus, when presented with opportunities to demonstrate positive character (such as competitions, camps, and projects), they indicated that they did so.
This study reinforces that youth recognize that there are multiple sources from which they gain character education, including the home, schools, peers, adult leaders, religious organizations and 4-H. Character education is no longer a traditional program or curriculum. Even if it is not labeled as formal character education, the results from this research implies that youth can be taught character through positive experiences and influences, including 4-H.

Furthermore, the results of this research imply that character education works. This is evident by the fact that youth recognize positive character and try to practice it in their schools, clubs, families and communities.

Since character education works, I will thus infer that character education is an obligation—an obligation to not only traditional educators and families, but to volunteers, coaches, mentors and those in other roles working with youth. In regards to 4-H Youth Development, its programming plays a role in the character development of a young person, no matter their age or how long they have been involved in 4-H programs.

**Implications for 4-H Youth Development**

The findings from this research are a positive reinforcement and support for 4-H Youth Development programs. As an overall program, 4-H is helping youth develop and gain skills needed to become contributing citizens and leaders.

While many may assume that 4-H Youth Development Programs effectively do so, the best way to verify/solidify this assumption and to strengthen the program is to hear it from the participants themselves. The responses youth gave from the research survey indicate that 4-H works to develop leadership, citizenship and life skills among youth. The programs impact youth and spurs them on to lead and practice character. This research supports overall 4-H Youth Development efforts.
Recommendations

In any area of education, there can always be room for growth and improvement. While the results of this research were positive for Kentucky 4-H Youth Development Programs, in order to continue to grow across the state and strengthen programs, several recommendations can be made:

1) It is recommended that Kentucky 4-H Youth Development Programs more aggressively promote the CHARACTER COUNTS! curriculum statewide, and possibly even provide in-service trainings and workshops for 4-H Agents and school/community leaders to attend. While 4-H youth are gaining character skills through other 4-H programming, it would further strengthen the character education aspect if agents and leaders targeted educating on this particular aspect.

2) As the data showed, youth are involved in other clubs/groups/organizations besides 4-H. Thus, in order to continue to gain youth participation, as well as strengthen character education, it is recommended that 4-H Youth Development Programs continue to partner with local schools and community organizations. Together, such partnerships can strengthen the character education that youth receive through activities that are mutually reinforcing.

3) Youth survey respondents indicated that one of the major influences of character knowledge is through adult friends/leaders, which could include 4-H Agents, Club Leaders and Volunteers. 4-H Youth Development Programs could not be what it is today without such leaders, thus it is recommended that 4-H continue to focus on recruiting quality adult volunteers. Furthermore, it is important to continue to emphasize character education and practices during volunteer trainings as well.

4) The demographic of the survey sample group included more female than male students. The Kentucky 4-H Annual Youth Enrollment Report also showed that
there were 6,845 more female youth enrolled in 4-H programs than males in 2010. Therefore, Kentucky 4-H must continue to offer a variety of programs that welcome both male and female youth.

5) The results from this research are positive reinforcements for Kentucky 4-H Youth Development Programs. Thus, it is recommended that the findings from this research be utilized as a recruitment and marketing tool for Kentucky 4-H. Since Kentucky schools are mandated to provide character education, these results that Kentucky 4-H programs provide and enhance character development can strengthen a current or prospective partnership. This could also be a draw to parents to let their youth participate in 4-H Youth Development Programs, as well as youth themselves. See Appendix G for a promotional piece developed for Kentucky 4-H based on this research.

**Future Research**

This research project has just skimmed the surface of the relationship between 4-H Youth Development Programs and character education. Further research could include analyzing specific 4-H programs and curriculum areas, such as animal science or communications, and evaluating their specific character education influence and components.

Another possible research project could pattern after the South Dakota CHARACTER COUNTS! study, which followed a sample group over a time period to track their character education influences and development.

Another variable that could be changed in the current study is the age group surveyed. The current study surveyed youth age 13 to 19, however, elementary and middle school youth could be presented with a similar survey, as well as 4-H members after their first year of 4-H involvement. Entrance and exit surveys could be conducted to gauge the overall experience youth have during their time of involvement in 4-H.
Finally, it would be useful to compare youth involved with 4-H and other youth oriented programs to assess the relative impact on character development.

Closing

It is my hope that through this research project, character education efforts will continue to grow, especially through 4-H Youth Development Programs. 4-H is a character education program that reaches many youth with many interests and talents. It encourages positive character in all programs, encouraging youth to move from their best self to even better leaders, friends and citizens. Character education and 4-H will continue to go hand-in-hand, building strong character-based programs, character-led volunteers and character-minded youth leaders.

Character education is a trend among schools and communities that will hopefully encourage today’s youth to carry on character education to their future leadership roles, as well as to those around them. It is the obligation of educators, community leaders, parents and anyone working with youth to present positive education, as well as present positive character opportunities. Character education is the key to the productivity and success of our society, now and in the future.
Appendix A:

Comparison of 4-H Programs and Six Pillars of Character

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4-H Program</th>
<th>Program Description</th>
<th>Character Education Component</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| Speech/Demonstrations (Communications)           | “helping youth to explore, develop, and define their communication abilities in regards to such areas as public speaking, personal expression, interaction with others, and professional correspondence.” | -Respect and fairness is promoted through local, district and state communications competitions.  
-Citizenship is promoted through public speaking opportunities at various 4-H events. |
| 4-H Teen Council                                 | Teen Councils are groups of youth, most often ages 13-18, who participate in community service projects, and actively pursue leadership opportunities. | -Responsibility is promoted through the Council officer system, following parliamentary procedure and so forth.  
-Respect is promoted through youth working with each other to accomplish common goals.  
-Trustworthiness is promoted through working on common projects.  
-Citizenship is fostered through giving back to 4-H programs and the local community. |
| 4-H Teen Summit                                  | Teen Summit is an overnight conference “designed to develop leadership, citizenship and communication skills” (Kentucky 4-H Website). | -Citizenship is developed through the entire event, which includes “active workshops, guest speakers, seminars, group living, recreation and recognition” (KY 4-H Website).  
-Respect is promoted through group living situations.  
-Responsibility is taught through group living, following a schedule and the overall events of the conference. |
Comparison of 4-H Programs and Six Pillars of Character (continued)

| Country Hams | “The Kentucky 4-H Country Ham program is a program that helps youth to develop applicable real world skills. Youth experience the process of curing hams, working with adults, exhibiting their hams at the KY State Fair and participating in speeches. | - *Respect* is taught through working with an adult and peers on the project.  
- *Responsibility* is cultivated through going through the ham-curing process and working towards a finished product. |
| Sewing | “... teaches youth about the art and skills of creating useful items using needle and thread.”  
- Encourages fair projects, 4-H Fashion Revue | - *Responsibility* through sewing safety.  
- |
| 4-H Issues Conference | This event is for top youth leaders across the state. Youth identify issues important to their age group and culture and create action plans to combat these issues. | - *Respect* is created through issues dialogue among peer groups.  
- *Trustworthiness* is fostered through the discussion of sensitive issues.  
- *Responsibility* is taught through group dialogue, group work and overall issues action plan.  
- *Citizenship* is promoted through presentation of action plans. |
| Land Judging | The purpose of this program is to promote interest in soils and the importance of land. There are local, district and state-level competitions for land judging. | - *Responsibility* is promoted through decision-making skills.  
- *Fairness* and *respect* are fostered through the element of competition. |
Comparison of 4-H Programs and Six Pillars of Character (continued)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Health Rocks</th>
<th>A program that promotes health lifestyle choices among youth, targeting the effects of drugs, tobacco and alcohol.</th>
<th>- <em>Respect</em> and <em>caring</em> for self and others is promoted by learning about making healthy lifestyle choices. - <em>Trustworthiness</em> is fostered through discussion of issues dealing with drugs, tobacco and alcohol. - <em>Responsibility</em> is created through youth making informed decisions for self. - <em>Citizenship</em> is promoted through encouraging healthy lifestyle choices among family, friends and community.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4-H Camp</td>
<td>4-H Camp is a residential opportunity for youth to experience various classes and activities to enhance life skills.</td>
<td>- <em>Respect</em>, <em>caring</em> and <em>trustworthiness</em> is cultivated through interacting with others, including peers and authority figures such as agents, adults, teen and camp staff. - <em>Responsibility</em> is promoted through the residential experience. - <em>Fairness</em> is promoted through teams, groups and cabins.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Livestock</td>
<td>Livestock programs “provide youth with opportunities to learn about livestock and develop life skills that are needed to be positive contributors to society.” Competitions is also a huge element to this program.</td>
<td>- <em>Respect</em>, <em>caring</em> and <em>responsibility</em> through caring for livestock. - <em>Fairness</em> is promoted through the element of livestock competition.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Forestry</td>
<td>The 4-H Forestry program provides curriculum, as well as competition opportunities.</td>
<td>- <em>Fairness</em> is promoted through the element of forestry competition. - <em>Respect</em>, <em>caring</em> and <em>responsibility</em> are cultivated through educating youth on the importance of our forests and earth.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Appendix B:

Pilot Study Lesson Plans and Summary

“Educating and Evaluating Youth Participation in Character & Ethics”

Jessica L. Mullins
University of Kentucky
Practicum- Fall 2009

Practicum Summary:
For my Fall 2009 Practicum, I will focus on a project dealing with youth, leadership and ethics titled “Educating and Evaluating Youth Participation in Character and Ethics.” In order to pursue this topic, I will lead the “Character and Ethics” action group at the 2009 Kentucky 4-H Issues Conference held in November. The purpose of Issues Conference is for high school youth from across the state to gather together to identify issues that face their age group and then develop strategies and plans on how they can address these issues in their own communities. As part of the practicum, I will design lesson plans for the four-day conference, identifying clear objectives, key concepts and action steps for the group. I will also draft a set of conversation questions and criteria to be in the students’ final action plans. Once the conference is over, I will then write a self-reflection of how the overall process and action group went, as well as conclusions gathered and what I learned from the evaluation process.

Event:
2009 Kentucky 4-H Issues Conference, November 19-22, 2009, Kentucky Leadership Center, Jabez, KY

Event Summary:
Each year, Kentucky 4-H hosts a four-day conference for high school sophomore and junior students from across the state. These students come together because of their interest in becoming more informed in issues that affect their age group, as well as how to
become leaders so that they can address these issues once back in their communities. A variety of “action groups” are offered to students, each group address an issues that has been pre-identified by a group of teens serving on a conference planning committee. Thus, the issues are identified by students and then attendees have the choice of which group they are most interested in getting involved in. During the conference, students meet with their action groups to discuss the issue and then as a group, develop an action plan on how to address it. The action plan comes in the form of a presentation to the entire delegation, as if they were presenting it for a proposal for funding.

Objectives:
The overall objective for this action group is to move students from awareness to action in the area of character and ethics. This will be done through activities, discussion and curriculum. The following are more distinct objectives:

- Define character
- Define ethics
- Define the relationship between character and ethics
- Identify the presence of character and ethics throughout our daily lives
- Identify the sources of character and ethics influence
- Create an awareness of one’s personal character and ethics
- Identify character and ethics issues within community
- Create an action plan to address character and ethics education in community
- Inspire others to value character and ethics education

Action Steps:
Through activities and discussion, I will provide the students with a foundation of knowledge of character and ethics definitions, situations and an application of real-life scenarios. From this foundation, I will then encourage students to begin brainstorming and dialogue the specific scenarios and/or aspects of character and ethics that matter to them the most. More so, then I will guide students to brainstorm ideas to address and education their peers and community in this issues. Through this process of education, dialogue and
guidance, students will go from character and ethics awareness to actually putting their knowledge and ideas into action.

**Key Concepts:**
It will be emphasized that the concepts, perspectives and definitions of character and ethics that the students enter the action group with 1) may not be the same; and 2)will be respected. Diversity will be welcomed and encouraged. It will also be noted that the purpose of this group is not to tell one what to do or not to do, or place any judgment on one’s views—but instead, create more of a personal awareness and evaluation of one’s own character and ethics, and then that of those around them. Again, the objective of “awareness to action” will be key in the process all activities and dialogue of this group.

**Resources:**

Dr. Bruce Weinstein is an ethics author and researcher, who is also known throughout media as “The Ethics Guy.” Weinstein’s work has appeared in various publications, including *BusinessWeek*, and he makes frequent appearances on *CNN* and *FOX News*. His latest publication, *Is it still cheating if I don’t get caught?*, is geared towards issues that youth face. However, the life principles he presents within the book can apply to any age when it comes to ethics and character. I will use Weinstein’s theories and situations as a resource for discussion within the action group. More so, I will also use my personal knowledge of character and ethics to integrate into the group.


The Ethics Curriculum Project (ECP) is an effort by Miami University to “produce high-quality online resources to enable educators to introduce ethics and critical thinking across the curriculum.” With permission from the ECP, I will utilize several of the worksheets and resources within the activities presented.

The Experiential Learning Model.
<www.national4-hheadquarters.gov/library/4H101_exper_model.ppt>

**Lesson Plans:** (See attached lessons & tentative schedule.)

**Criteria to be in Students’ Final Presentation:**
- Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of topic
- Be able to clearly present topic
- Demonstrate knowledge to awareness to action
- Present real-life application
- Create a motivation for others to care/participation

**Self-Reflection of Process/Action Group:**

When presented with the task of facilitating the “Character and Ethics” action group at the 2009 4-H Issues Conference, I agreed to the opportunity in hopes that I would be able to use the knowledge I’ve gained through literature and coursework in the CLD program to educate and guide this group of youth to becoming active in this issue. My goal of all of my research is to promote the concept of “awareness to action” in the area of leadership, character and ethics.

Although I had planned out activities, discussion questions and other curriculum for the group, I didn’t expect to learn so much from the participants myself! Throughout our meeting time together, we built on character and ethics concepts, so that the participants could define, understand, and integrate the topic into their daily lives—and they did just that and more! My initial prediction was that these students would be aware of what “Character and Ethics” entails but not really understand what types of issues that included, or that it’s not a big deal in their community. I am glad to say that I was wrong—in this particular group of 13 youth, they were very aware of what character and ethics entailed and knew of the issues around them. More so, they identified that compromising character and ethics was a major pressure for them and their peers and they wanted to find a solution to better this issue.

Through discussion of certain issues and case studies, the group had to work through identifying the top character and ethics issues they face, as well as how to combat them collectively. This was not an easy task for them at times, thus I would try to guide them, help them re-group and ask them other question that may spark a solution. Their teamwork and passion about this issue was inspiring.
This has been one of the most rewarding and empowering experiences I’ve had within my job and within my research thus far. To witness youth who acknowledge the concept of character and ethics, identify it as an issue that their age group faces, and then want to take action on addressing it was very empowering and hopeful.

Action Group Action Plan:
The teens in the “Character and Ethics” action group came up with a proposal to start a school organization/club called the “Ethics Fair Association” (EFA). The EFA would host three different events at the local elementary, middle and high schools. The goal of each event would be to educate students about ethical issues and making informed decisions and choices. To do this, the group would have games, activities and information available to the students, as well as prizes such as t-shirts, wristbands and so forth. The action group chose to host such starting in the elementary schools because they agreed that this is where character and ethics issues start and if younger kids become more aware of what to do early on, it might prevent poor character and ethics choices in the future. The action group came up with a budget and created a presentation to present to a mock fiscal court. The action group requested $2500 for their plan and was awarded $1250.

Results/Information:
Overall, my initial predictions about the views youth have on character and ethics proved to be skewed. Through both participating in and leading this action group, I have concluded that youth age 15-18 have a grasp on what character and ethics is, and acknowledge and identify that is an issue facing their age group and society as a whole.

Students in the action group identified 30 “character and ethics” issues within group planning, including the following (duplicates included):

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Lying</th>
<th>Cheating</th>
<th>Stealing</th>
<th>Violence</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Pregnancy</td>
<td>Intolerance</td>
<td>Drugs/Alcohol</td>
<td>Peer Pressure</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sex</td>
<td>Lying</td>
<td>Cheating</td>
<td>Stealing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>Divorce</td>
<td>Alcohol Abuse</td>
<td>Politics</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>----------</td>
<td>---------</td>
<td>---------------</td>
<td>----------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Grades</td>
<td>Stress</td>
<td>Cliques/Friends</td>
<td>Suicide</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fraud</td>
<td>Drugs/Alcohol Cheating</td>
<td>Lying</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Stealing</td>
<td>Violence</td>
<td>Demoralization</td>
<td>Bullying</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Out of these issues, the action group identified cheating, suicide/self-esteem issues and drugs and alcohol as the top three moral issues that teens face in today's society.

The students also identified character and ethics influences that they say have an impact on teen’s views of these issues. Those influences include:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Internet</th>
<th>Media</th>
<th>Friends</th>
<th>Books</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>Trends</td>
<td>Cliques/Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>Life</td>
<td>Music</td>
<td>“Bandwagon”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Neighborhood</td>
<td>Religion</td>
<td>School</td>
<td>Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Media</td>
<td>Family</td>
<td>Friends</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Music</td>
<td>Television</td>
<td>Movies</td>
<td>Religious groups</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Books</td>
<td>Celebrities</td>
<td>Parties</td>
<td>Alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Internet</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

An anonymous survey was also conducted during the course of the action group, to gain a better understanding of teen’s views of character and ethics. On the following pages includes the survey administered, and the results.
CHARACTER & ETHICS SURVEY

-Your age: _____
-Gender:______

-Please circle YES or NO for the following questions:

1) Would you say that you have a personal set of ethics? YES NO
2) Do you follow a code of ethics of an organization or club? YES NO
3) Do you consider yourself a leader? YES NO
4) Have you ever been a part of a character or ethics class/training/etc.? YES NO
5) Have your teachers, family or friends ever talked with you about character or ethics? YES NO

-On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being least important, 5 being most important), how important do you feel it is to have good character?

1 2 3 4 5

-Once a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being least important, 5 being most important), how important do you feel it is to be an ethical person?

1 2 3 4 5

-What factors do you feel has influenced your character and ethics? (Circle all that apply.)
Media
Family
Friends
Religion
Education
Neighborhood
Other:____________________________

-At what age do you believe you first learned about character & ethics? _____

-List the top three characteristics you look for in a friend:

1)
2)
3)

-Who is a person you consider has good character & ethics? ____________________
Why?__________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
______________________________________________________________________
1) "Would you say that you have a personal set of ethics?"

2) "Do you follow a code of ethics for an organization or club?"
3) Do you consider yourself a leader?

4) Have you ever been a part of a character or ethics class/training/etc?

5) Have your teachers, family or friends ever talked with you about character & ethics?
On a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being least important, 5 being most important), how important do you feel it is to have good character?
12 participants responded with (5) and 1 participants with (4)

Once a scale from 1 to 5 (1 being least important, 5 being most important), how important do you feel it is to be an ethical person?
11 participants responded with (5) and 2 participants with (4)

What factors do you feel has influenced your character and ethics? (Circle all that apply.)

- Media (6) YES (7) NO
- Family (13) YES
- Friends (12) YES (1) NO
- Religion (12) YES (1) NO
- Education (9) YES (4) NO
- Neighborhood (5) YES (8) NO

Other: “Everything”; "Independent Research"

At what age do you believe you first learned about character & ethics?
- Responses ranged from age 2-11

List the top three characteristics you look for in a friend:

- Trustworthy
- Kind
- Non-judgmental
- Trustworthy

- Good Listener
- Christian
- Honesty
- Popular

- Responsible
- Good Looking
- Friendly
- Good Attitude

- Personality
- Honesty
- Outspoken
- Fun

- Not a total jerk
- Like me
- Trusting
- Funny

- Trust
- Background
- Family
- How they treat others

- Smart
- Fun
- Intelligence
- Honesty

- Friendly
- Responsible
- Laid-back
- Fun personality

- Loyal
- Honest
- Trustworthy
- Smart

- Daring
- Openness
- Honesty
- Trustworthy

- Acceptance
- Talented
- Understanding
- Risk-taker

- Honesty
- Leader

Who is a person you consider has good character & ethics?

- Participants answers ranged from parents and siblings to Mother Theresa, Jesus and Billy Graham

**Evaluation Process:**
The youth’s proposal and presentation was the first evidence that they understood the concept of character and ethics and could explain it to others. More so, it was a testament to their acknowledgement of the presence of the issues. Second, in asking them what they learned from the group, the following comments were made:
“I learned that it’s not just me that thinks this is a big deal. Teens my age have bad character and ethics and we need to stop it before it’s too late.”

“I learned how to work in a team and how to make a plan to address a problem.”

“Character and ethics covers a lot more issues than I realized. It really is important.”

I could extend this evaluation by email post-surveys or comment cards to participants in a month or so to see what they’ve done since the conference—whether it be putting the proposal into place in their own county, or even if ethics has crossed their minds since returning home. Overall Conclusions:

I am very grateful for this opportunity to lead students on a journey of “Character and Ethics.” I think this was a good preview experience to how my research should go in the upcoming semester in regards to my thesis work. I look forward to seeing if more groups of students hold the same view and place the same importance on such issues as this group did.
WELCOME!! You have chosen the “Character & Ethics” action group because you recognize that it’s an issue that affects teens your age, you want to learn more about it, or you just randomly happened to be put in this group (and if that is the case, it’s your lucky day!). YOU are the leaders in your community and schools and YOU have the opportunity to make a difference and start something new in what we are going to be discussing and doing in the next few days. We will be discussing the following:
- What is character and ethics?
- Why is it important?
- What are the issues around character and ethics that is facing youth your age?
- What do we do?

It is hoped that through being a part of this action group, you will evaluate your own character and ethics set and move from a state of awareness to action when it comes to this topic.

You will be presented with the task of creating an action plan to address some aspect of the issue of Character & Ethics. You will work together as a group to discuss ideas and then come up with an action plan. You will form a presentation to be presented in front of the entire Issues delegation, as well as a mock City Council that would be evaluating you for (mock) funding. Within your presentation, you must identify:
- Issue at hand
- Significance/importance to age and community
- How to address the issue/ ACTION PLAN
- Convince mock Council that your project is worth funding

Being a part of this action group does not stop once Issues is over. You can take the action plan back to your community to implement it accordingly. There is also real funding possibilities available once back in your county for this project.

Rules to remember:
- RESPECT… facilitator, yourself and others. We are not here to sway your opinion or judge, but instead to find a common ground to address the issue.
2009 Issues Conference
“Character & Ethics” Action Group
Tentative Schedule

Friday 10/20:
11-12 p.m.  Ice Breaker/Activity #1
            Information Cards
            My Introduction/Action Group Overview
            Assignment: Over lunch, be thinking of how you define character & ethics...
            Notebooks

1-5 p.m.    Participant Survey
            Activity #2
            Activity #3
            Activity #4
            Continue Sharing Notebooks
            “So What?”
            Break/Snack
            Intro. to Case Study
            Activity #5
            “So What? And what are you going to do about it?”
            Edit case study (if necessary) (Is it realistic??)
            Break
            Brainstorm
            Present Ideas & Plan
            Work on Presentation

8-9 p.m.    Work on Presentation

Saturday 10/21:
9:00 a.m.-Noon Work on/Practice Presentation
LESSON PLAN

Title of Lesson: Activity #1: People Bingo

Club/Program Utilizing Lesson: Character & Ethics Action Group,
4-H Issues Conference 2009

Objective/Goals:
1) To introduce participants to each other & learn more about them
2) To create a sense of teamwork & trust
3) To build relationships between group participants

Materials Needed: People Bingo Sheets
Pencils

Description/Directions: Give each participant a “People Bingo” sheet and tell them that they have to find others in the group that match the description on the bingo squares. (i.e. Someone who has a brother, Someone who has traveled outside of the country, etc.)

Tell participants that horizontal/vertical/diagonal wins OR see how many boxes they can fill in a certain amount of time.

-One person can sign your sheet only one time (unless group is particularly small).

Processing Questions/Comments:
- Have participants share how they got “Bingo” and who in the group had the related criteria.
- What was something you learned from this activity?
LESSON PLAN

Title of Lesson: Activity #2: Putting the Pieces Together

Club/Program

Utilizing Lesson: Character & Ethics Action Group, 4-H Issues Conference 2009

Objective/Goals:
1) Continue teambuilding of group
2) Introduce topic of character & ethics
3) Generate discussion on the topic of character & ethics

Materials Needed:
- Blank Puzzle Pieces (can be ordered, or drawn & cut out from poster board)
- Markers
- Tape

Description/Directions:
- Give each participant a blank puzzle piece and give them the task of drawing what character and ethics "looks like" or writing words to describe how they interpret character and ethics.
- Encourage participants to be creative and let them know that they will be sharing this with the group.

Processing Questions/Comments:
- Have participants introduce themselves and share their puzzle piece, explaining what they wrote/drew.
- Once everyone has explained, have them put the puzzle pieces together.
- QUESTION: What are some of the common themes within these pieces?
  Did anyone draw/write anything unexpected?

**Adapted from: Adaptation by Mark Mains, Extension Specialist for 4-H Youth Development, University of Kentucky, from materials presented by Justin Crowe, Extension Specialist for 4-H Youth Development, University of Tennessee
## LESSON PLAN

### Title of Lesson:
Activity #3: Defining Character & Ethics

### Club/Program
Character & Ethics Action Group, 4-H Issues Conference 2009

### Objective/Goals:
1) Students will gain a better understanding of character & ethics
2) Students will interpret their own meaning of character & ethics
3) Students will gain a better understanding of the connection of character & ethics and real-life situations

### Materials Needed:
- Quotes printed out
- Optional: construction paper, glue, tape

### Description/Directions:
- Have participants draw for a piece of paper that will have a "character & ethics" related quote on it
- Throughout the group time together, have participants read the quote to the group and then give their own interpretation/meaning behind it and how it related to character & ethics
- If they choose, have participant glue the quote onto colorful paper and tape the quotes around the room.

### Processing Questions/Comments:
- Hopefully the quotes will inspire you as we learn more about character & ethics!

**Adapted from: Adaptation by Mark Mains, Extension Specialist for 4-H Youth Development, University of Kentucky, from materials Unlock Your Leadership Potential, University of Florida Extension Service. Quotes from http://www.cetac.org/teacherresource/
LESSON PLAN

**Title of Lesson:** Activity #4: Where Does It Come From?

**Club/Program:** Character & Ethics Action Group, 4-H Issues Conference 2009

**Objective/Goals:**
1) Participants will process the influences of character & ethics
2) Participants will reflect on personal character & ethics

**Materials Needed:** Paper, Markers, Pencils, Flip Chart

**Description/Directions:**
- Have participants brainstorm in groups about their own character & ethics and make a list of character & ethics influences
- Have groups share their ideas
- Record influences on a flip chart to be displayed in the group meeting area

**Processing Questions/Comments:**
- Have all of these influences been good?
- What did you learn about yourself in this activity?
LESSON PLAN

Title of Lesson: Activity #5: Scenarios

Club/Program
Utilizing Lesson: Character & Ethics Action Group,
4-H Issues Conference 2009

Objective/Goals:
1) Participants will be more aware of the character & ethics
   situations around them

Materials Needed:
- Scenario Sheets
- DVD's: Spiderman, Pinnocchio

Description/Directions:
- Divide participants into groups and have them draw a piece
  of paper that lists a “character & ethics scenario.” Groups
  will discuss the situation and how they would react. Groups
  will also use the “Ethical Reasoning Cooperative Tool” to
  analyze situation.
- Have groups share their scenario and open for discussion.

Processing Questions/Comments:
- Have you faced similar situations?
- Did you learn anything about yourself in this activity?
- What problems or issues seem to occur over and over?

Character & Ethics Scenario #1:
“T’m best friends with a girl—I’ll call her Ashley—who is very popular at school, and as a result, a lot of other girls are jealous of her. Sometimes when I’m at lunch, I’ll hear girls say nasty things about her, and they love to spread rumors and gossip. Of course, since I’m Ashley’s friend I never join in, and sometimes I tell them to shut up, but I also wonder if being a good friend means that I should tell Ashley about what people say behind her back.”
What do YOU think?

Character & Ethics Scenario #2:
“I play on our school’s baseball team, and a lot of the guys take steroids to bulk up. I’m pretty sure the coach knows about it, but he has never said we can’t, probably because we are winning in our division this season. I know that this issue is in the news a lot these days, but I really don’t see why. I mean, what’s the harm? No one I know has developed any of the problems you hear about. I think the whole thing is exaggerated by the media just because it makes a good story. What should I do?”
What do YOU think?

Character & Ethics Scenario #3:
“Last week I created a profile on one of the popular social networking websites. I had a dilemma, though, because if I had posted my real picture, no one would contact me. Most people judge you on the basis of how you look, and I’m short and overweight, so I decided to put a picture of someone I found on the Internet. (I don’t know the person, but I was a good picture of someone about my age.) I figure I’ll make a lot of friends and that if people ever want to meet me, I’ll send them my real photo. If they’re really my friends, they will understand why I put someone else’s picture in my profile. If they’re not true friends, then it won’t matter if they get mad. My best friend thinks I should put up my real picture.”
What do YOU think?

Character & Ethics Scenario #4:
“I don’t understand why a lot of people make such a fuss about downloading music for free from the Internet. Why would anyone want to pay for something you can get for nothing? To me, it’s not stealing at all. Stealing is when you walk into a grocery store and take a can of soda without paying for it. That’s wrong, because you’re physically taking something that doesn’t belong to you, and the store had to buy that can of soda somewhere. But when you download a song, someone has already bought the CD or music file somewhere, and that person is just sharing it with others. No one is losing any money. To me, the sites with free digital songs on them are like radio stations, even if technically speaking they’re illegal. Actually, they’re better than radio stations, because you get to choose which songs you want to hear—and you get to keep the music too.
A lot of free music out there comes from bands that are already rich anyway. They don’t need any more money. What’s the big deal with downloading songs for free?”
What do YOU think?
Character & Ethics Scenario #5:
This morning when I was taking a test, I noticed a girl named Hannah copying answer off of the person next to her. She looked around and saw that I had seen her—apparently no one else had (including the teacher, who was reading a book). After class, she came up to me and told me not to tell anyone what she had done. She said it was the first time she’d ever cheated and the only reason she did it was because she was going through a difficult time at home. She said her parents were getting a divorce and she hasn’t been able to concentrate on her homework. She promised she would never do it again, and said that I should do the right thing and keep it to myself.
The thing is, we have an honor code at school, and we’re supposed to report violations of the code to our teachers. But I’m not a rat. Besides, if she is telling the truth about her parents, I can see (sort of) why she did what she did. What should I do? What do YOU think?
Appendix C:

Research Survey
12) Please check all of the following 4-H programs that you've participated in:

- Speech/Demonstration
- 4-H Teen Council
- Teen Summit
- Country Ham
- Sewing
- Issues Conference
- Land Judging
- Health Rocks
- 4-H Camp
- Livestock
- Forestry

13) Some counties offer other, specialized 4-H programs to their youth. Please list any other 4-H programs you've been a part of:

____________________________________________________
____________________________________________________

14) Please check your gender:

- Male
- Female

15) Please check your age:

- 13
- 14
- 15
- 16
- 17
- 18
- 19

16) Please check your ethnic origin:

- American Indian/Alaska Native
- Asian
- Black/African American
- Hispanic/Latino
- Native Hawaiian/Pacific Islander
- White/Caucasian
- Other or Unknown

4-H Youth Development Survey

You are receiving this survey because you and your parent/guardian agreed for your participation to give us information about how Kentucky 4-H is doing in the area of Character Education.

This survey is 16 questions and should take around 10 minutes to complete.

Your name will not appear anywhere on this survey, so please answer all questions honestly.

If you have any questions during or after the survey, please see the person administering the survey at your site.

You do have the option not to complete the survey, however, it would be greatly appreciated if you would provide us with this information!

If you choose not to complete the survey, please place your blank survey and pencil in the collection box in the back of the room.

THANK YOU for your participation!
1) Please check YES or NO for following statements according to what YOU believe:
   - It's important to me to have good character. __YES__ __NO
   - It's important to care about and help others. __YES__ __NO
   - It's important to me to be a good friend. __YES__ __NO
   - It's important to me to be a good citizen. __YES__ __NO
   - It's okay to lie if it's for a good cause. __YES__ __NO
   - I try to be fair in all situations. __YES__ __NO
   - It's important to respect yourself and others. __YES__ __NO

2) Of the following characteristics, please check YES or NO if you look for these in choosing friends:
   - Honest __YES__ __NO
   - Caring __YES__ __NO
   - Ethical __YES__ __NO
   - Smart __YES__ __NO
   - Fair __YES__ __NO
   - Daring __YES__ __NO
   - Popular __YES__ __NO
   - Athletic __YES__ __NO
   - Outspoken __YES__ __NO
   - Responsible __YES__ __NO
   - Funny __YES__ __NO
   - Talented __YES__ __NO
   - Respectful __YES__ __NO
   - Risk-Taker __YES__ __NO
   - Leader __YES__ __NO
   - Pretty/Handsome __YES__ __NO
   - Trustworthy __YES__ __NO

3) CHARACTER COUNTS! is a national character education program that Kentucky 4-H uses to teach youth about respect, caring, trustworthiness, responsibility, fairness and citizenship.
   Have you ever participated in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program? (Check one.)
   __YES__
   __NO__
   __DON'T KNOW__

4) Have you ever been a part of a character education class or club in your community, school, religious group or home? (Check one.)
   __YES__
   __NO__
   __DON'T KNOW__

If yes, please list where: ___________________________________________

5) Check YES or NO for the following:
   Have you developed knowledge about character from...
   - Home/Family __YES__ __NO
   - School __YES__ __NO
   - 4-H __YES__ __NO
   - Youth Friends __YES__ __NO
   - Adult Friends/Leaders __YES__ __NO
   - Religious Groups __YES__ __NO
   - Other clubs/sports __YES__ __NO

6) Would you say that you practice good character? (Check one.)
   __All the time__
   __Most of the time__
   __Some of the time__
   __Never__

7) Do you consider yourself a leader? (Check one.)
   If yes, who do you think you lead/influence? ____________________________
   __YES__ __NO

8) Are you involved in any other clubs, teams, groups or organizations besides 4-H? (Check one.)
   If yes, please list: _________________________________________________
   __YES__ __NO

9) Do you feel that 4-H programs have taught you about being a better person, citizen, friend and/or leader? (Check one.)
   If yes, can you think of an example of how 4-H has helped you?
   _________________________________________________________________
   __YES__
   __NO__
   __DON'T KNOW__

10) How long have you been a member of 4-H? (Check one.)
    __Less than 1 year__
    __1-5 years__
    __6-10 years__
    __More than 10 years__

11) How many years have you attended 4-H Teen Conference? (Check one.)
    __This is my first year__
    __2 years__
    __3 years__
    __4 years__
    __5 years__

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Appendix D:

IRB Approval Form

Consent to Participate in a Research Study
4-H Youth Development & Character Education

Youth delegates to the 2010 Kentucky 4-H Teen Conference are invited to take part in a research study about the effectiveness of 4-H programming on the knowledge, beliefs and character practices of youth leaders.

If you consent to your child’s participation, he/she will be given a paper survey during a conference assembly on Tuesday, June 15, 2010 at Memorial Hall. The survey has 16 questions and takes an estimated 10 minutes to complete. The survey questions are geared towards how the delegates feel about character education and how 4-H programming is doing in regards to that area. This study is anonymous. Your child’s name will not appear on the survey. That means that no one, not even members of the research team, will know that the information your child gives came from him/her. The data will be securely stored until June 30, 2013 at which time it will be destroyed.

There are no costs associated with taking part in the study. To the best of our knowledge there are no risks to your child in sharing this information and he/she will not receive any rewards or payments for participating. Your child will not lose any benefits or rights they would normally have if you do not want them to participate in the study.

Although the survey is being given at the conference, it is a voluntary activity separate from the conference. Whether or not you give permission for your child to take the survey will have no effect on your child’s participation in the conference.

The person in charge of this study is Jessica L. Mullins of the University of Kentucky’s Department of Community and Leadership Development. She is a graduate student being guided in this research by Dr. Patricia Dyk. There may also be other individuals on the research team from the University of Kentucky assisting at different times during the survey.

Again, by doing this study, we hope to learn more about the views of character education held by youth leaders, as well as how they feel that 4-H programming has affected their own knowledge, beliefs and practices of character.

If you have any questions, suggestions, concerns or complaints about the research study and/or survey, you can contact Jessica L. Mullins at jmulins@uky.edu. If you have any questions about your child’s rights as a volunteer in this research, contact the staff in the Office of Research Integrity at the University of Kentucky at 859-257-9428 or toll free at 1-866-400-9428.

Please check one of the following:

_____ I agree for my child to participate in the Character Education survey at the 2010 Kentucky 4-H Teen Conference.

_____ I decline my child’s participation in the Character Education survey at the 2010 Kentucky 4-H Teen Conference.

Name of Child: _______________________________

Printed name of Parent/Guardian: _______________________________

Signature of Parent/Guardian: _______________________________ Date: _______________________________
Appendix E:

Survey Administration Script

Script for Survey Administration

“Hello. My name is _________________________________.

When you filled out your Teen Conference enrollment application, you and your parent or guardian were informed about a research study that is collecting information in order to describe how Kentucky 4-H programs enhance the character development of youth leaders. If your parent or guardian agreed for you to participate in the survey, you will have a red dot on your nametag. Please look at your nametag now to determine if you are eligible to participate in the survey.

The survey is 16 questions long and will take under 10 minutes to complete. Your answers are very valuable to 4-H programs, however, if you do not want to participate, you do not have to. No one will be mad at you if you choose not to complete the survey.

Please know that if at any time you have questions about the survey, come see me.

When you are finished with the survey, please place it in the plastic box in the back of the room.

At this time, if you have a red dot on your nametag and you agree to participate, please come to the front to pick up the survey. If you do not have a red dot on your nametag, you are dismissed from this assembly.

Thank you in advance for helping us continue to make the best better!”
Appendix F:
Tables 4.2—4.9

Table 4.2

Youth Responses of Who They Feel That They Lead/Influence*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Categories of Responses</th>
<th>Number of Youth Responding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Friends/Peers</td>
<td>37</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Younger Youth</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clubs/Groups/Teams Involved In</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family</td>
<td>14</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Everyone</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>School</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Community</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*From survey question 7: “Do you consider yourself a leader? If yes, who do you think you lead/influence?”

Table 4.3

Other 4-H Programs Youth Indicated Being Involved In*

- OMK (Operation Military Kids)
- Cooking
- Dog club
- Horse club
- Archery
- Knitting
- Sharpshooter
- Shooting Sports
- Homeschool Club
- Goats
- Youth leadership
- Community Service
- Low Ropes Course
- Capitol Experience
- Health & Safety
- Woodworking
- Small Engines
- Entrepreneurship
- Southern Region Teen Leadership Conference
- Day Camps
- Horticulture Judging

*From survey question 13: “Some counties offer other, specialized 4-H programs to their youth. Please list any other 4-H programs you’ve been a part of.”

Table 4.4

Responses to Survey Questions Gauging Character Knowledge

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>YES (if responding)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q3: CHARACTER COUNTS! is a national character education program that Kentucky 4-H use to teach youth about respect, caring trustworthiness, responsibility, fairness and citizenship. Have you ever participated in the CHARACTER COUNTS! program?</td>
<td>15 (12.5)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q4: Have you ever been a part of a character education class or club in your community, school, religious group or home?</td>
<td>22 (18.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have you ever developed knowledge about character from:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5C: 4-H</td>
<td>114 (95)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5A: Home/Family</td>
<td>112 (93.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5D: Youth Friends</td>
<td>109 (90.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5E: Adult Friends/Leaders</td>
<td>109 (90.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5B: School</td>
<td>108 (90.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5G: Other Clubs/Sports</td>
<td>105 (87.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q5F: Religious Groups</td>
<td>93 (77.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q8: Are you involved in any other clubs, teams, groups or organizations besides 4-H?</td>
<td>109 (93.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: n=120, *Number in parenthesis indicate percent (%)
Table 4.5

Locations of Other Character Education Classes Youth Have Been Involved In*

- School
- Church
- National Jr. Beta Club
- FFA
- Character First Education Class
- 4-H Health & Safety Club

*From survey question 4: “Have you ever been a part of a character education class or club in your community, school, religious group or home? If yes, please list where.”

Table 4.6

Other Clubs, Teams, Groups or Organizations Besides 4-H Youth Are Involved In*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Club/Team/Group/Organization</th>
<th>Youth Responding</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sports</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Honor Society</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BETA Club</td>
<td>15</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FFA</td>
<td>17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Boy Scouts/Girl Scouts</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Drama/Theatre</td>
<td>13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religious Groups</td>
<td>21</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Academic Team/Group</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Band/Music</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other/Specialized Groups</td>
<td>96</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(i.e. Journalism, Yearbook Staff, Chess Club, Science Club)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*From survey question 8: “Are you involved in any other clubs, teams, groups or organizations besides 4-H? If yes, please list.”
Table 4.7  
*Responses to Survey Questions Gauging Character Beliefs/Attitudes*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>YES (if responding)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Please check YES or NO for following statements according to what YOU believe:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1A: It's important to me to have good character.</td>
<td>120 (100)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1B: It's important to care about and help others.</td>
<td>120 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1C: It’s important to me to be a good friend.</td>
<td>119 (99.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1D: It’s important to me to be a good citizen.</td>
<td>116 (97.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1E: It’s wrong to cheat on a test.</td>
<td>115 (95.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1F: It’s okay to lie if it’s for a good cause.</td>
<td>36 (30.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q1H: It’s important to respect yourself and others.</td>
<td>120 (100)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q9: Do you feel that 4-H programs have taught you about being a better person, citizen, friend and/or leader?</td>
<td>106 (88.3)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: n=120, *Number in parenthesis indicate percent (%)
Table 4.8

Responses to Survey Questions Gauging Character Intentions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>YES (if responding)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Of the following characteristics, please check YES or NO if you look for these in choosing friends:</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2A: Honest</td>
<td>120 (100)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2B: Caring</td>
<td>118 (98.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2E: Fair</td>
<td>115 (95.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2J: Responsible</td>
<td>113 (94.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2M: Respectful</td>
<td>111 (92.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2Q: Trustworthy</td>
<td>111 (92.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2K: Funny</td>
<td>109 (90.8)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2C: Ethical</td>
<td>99 (83.2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2D: Smart</td>
<td>92 (75.7)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2O: Leader</td>
<td>81 (67.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2L: Talented</td>
<td>78 (65)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2I: Outspoken</td>
<td>69 (57.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2F: Daring</td>
<td>64 (53.3)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2N: Risk-taker</td>
<td>60 (50)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2P: Pretty/Handsome</td>
<td>40 (33.6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2H: Athletic</td>
<td>36 (30)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Q2G: Popular</td>
<td>11 (17.2)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: n=120, *Number in parenthesis indicate percent (%)

Table 4.9

Responses to Survey Questions Gauging Character Practices

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Survey Question</th>
<th>YES (if responding)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Q6: Would you say that you practice good character?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>All of the time</td>
<td>82 (68.3)*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Most of the time</td>
<td>21 (17.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Some of the time</td>
<td>9 (7.5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Never</td>
<td>8 (6.7)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note: n=120, *Number in parenthesis indicate percent (%)
References


Boston University School of Education Center for the Advancement of Character and Ethics Online (2010). http://www.bu.edu/education/caec/


Kentucky 4-H Online (2010). http://www.kentucky4h.org

Kentucky Annual Youth Enrollment Report (2010). Kentucky State 4-H Office, Lexington, KY.


Vita

Jessica Lynn Mullins was born on April 9, 1985 in Hazard, Kentucky. She graduated from Breathitt County High School in 2003 and from there attended Eastern Kentucky University (EKU) in Richmond, Kentucky. At EKU, she obtained a B.A. in Public Relations and Minor in Political Science in Spring 2007. She began her studies at the University of Kentucky Graduate School in Fall 2007.