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Determining Factors Affecting Adult Volunteerism in the Texas 4-H Program

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Abstract

Volunteers have always been essential to the success of 4-H youth development programs. However, the number of available volunteers has declined. Although this decline is not new, it is imperative to recruit and retain adult volunteers for youth programming. Researchers sought to describe characteristics of current Texas volunteers and identify motivational functions according to the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI). This descriptive study utilized enrolled volunteers in the Texas 4-H program, with responses from 1,225 individuals. Most volunteers were white, college educated, females, and had no prior affiliation with the program. Volunteers were mainly motivated by the values and understanding function. It was recommended information from volunteer demographics and identified motivations be used by extension volunteer administrators to more effectively recruit and retain volunteers for 4-H youth development programing.

Keywords: volunteerism; 4-H volunteers; adult volunteerism

Introduction

4-H youth development began as a program with the intent of having youth educate their parents on practices to improve agricultural production on their family farms (Van Horn et al., 1998). Through the past century, 4-H youth development programs have evolved into focusing on youth life-skill development, citizenship, and leadership (Borden et al., 2014). Today, the 4-H program strives to reflect the current needs of society while maintaining traditions grounded in hands-on learning approaches. According to Smith and Finley (2004), adult volunteers are crucial to this life-skill approach. Wessel and Wessel (1982) even went as far as to say adult volunteers have been pertinent to the success of the 4-H program since its inception. White and Arnold (2003) indicated "the implementation of programs relies almost exclusively on the work of thousands of dedicated adult volunteers" (para. 1).

Although 4-H youth development is heavily reliant on volunteers, there has been a decline in their availability nationwide. A total of 600,000 volunteers was reported in 2016, (National 4-H Council, 2016), while 500,000 volunteers was reported for the program in 2018 (National 4-H Council, 2018). Even though there was a 100,000-volunteer loss reported during this time period, youths enrolled in the program across the nation remained constant (National 4-H Council, 2016, 2018). However, the decline in volunteer numbers nationally is not new. Culp III (1997) recorded an annual one-third turnover rate in volunteers for 4-H.

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The decline in volunteers has not only been observed nationally, but in Texas as well. According to Texas 4-H, volunteers decreased from 30,191 in 2019 to 26,180 in 2020. In order to mitigate this growing issue, we need to determine a way to attract and recruit volunteers more efficiently. Borden et al. (2014) stated, "Attracting and training dedicated adults will largely shape the 4-H program over the next several decades" (p. 3). Due to a volunteer's direct role in maintaining the integrity of the 4-H program, it is imperative to recruit and maintain a solid volunteer base. "Information about the 'who' and 'why' of 4-H volunteerism enables managers of the 4-H volunteer program to plan effective programs to better identify, recruit and retain leaders" (Rohs, 1986, p. 98). In the case of this study, the "who" was demographic characteristics of volunteers and the "why" was the motivation of volunteers.

Review of Literature

Since demographic characteristics of volunteers can help managers of 4-H volunteer programs better identify, recruit, and retain leaders, a review of literature was carried out to determine the demographic composition of past volunteers. It is widely known 4-H youth development programs are in all areas across the country, from rural areas to urban. In 1984, Rohs conducted a study of Ohio volunteers and found 74% of them resided in rural areas (Rohs, 1984). However, by 2001 it was found more than 40,000 volunteers were from suburban or urban areas (Wolford et al., 2001).

With other demographics, a study conducted by Culp III et al. (2005) found the majority of 4-H volunteers were female, nearly half had participated in 4-H as youth, and many currently had children involved in 4-H. Culp III et al. (2005) also reported 4-H volunteers commonly volunteered for religious groups and other school organizations. These findings differed slightly from a previous study where 70% of volunteers were female and 60% had participated in 4-H as youth (Rohs, 1984). In Nebraska, Fritz et al. (2003) concluded a majority of volunteers had children in 4-H and were alumni of the program. Smith and Finley (2004) found a majority of Pennsylvania volunteers were female and college educated. Additionally, Fritz et al. (2000) concluded most Nebraskan individuals who volunteered were approaching middle age.

Previous studies provided an idea of the demographic makeup of 4-H youth development volunteers, but what is their role in the organization? In Texas, volunteers generally focus their efforts in assisting with the following general project areas: agriculture and livestock, family and community health, leadership and citizenship, natural resources, and science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) (Texas 4-H, 2021). Family and community health has the most youth 4-H members followed by agriculture and livestock projects, natural resource projects, leadership and citizenship projects, and finally STEM projects (Texas 4-H, 2020). After training, volunteers may help with activities such as leading community clubs, serving as chaperones, serving as an event judge, being a camp counselor, creating community service opportunities for youth, and providing school-based or after-school programs (Texas 4-H, 2021).

In addition to understanding volunteer demographics, it is also important to understand what motivates volunteers in order to better identify, recruit, and retain leaders. Culp III (1997) found top motivations of 4-H volunteers included their children's involvement in the organization and the affiliation needs of individuals. Fritz et al. (2000) determined a majority of respondents in their study volunteered for the purpose of learning new things. Additionally, Schmiesing et al. (2005) found volunteers in their study were primarily motivated by values. Eason et al. (2011) also found values are the highest motivational construct for volunteers while career enhancement was the lowest motivational factor, echoing similar results found by White and Arnold (2003).

Extension educators or agents play an important role in the administration of volunteers. It was noted by Clary et al. (1998), volunteers whose roles match their motivations will be more satisfied and stay in the position. Placing 4-H volunteers in roles which fill their needs, bringing satisfaction and enjoyment,

will improve retention and longevity of volunteers (Culp III et al., 1999). A major part of an extension educator's job is keeping volunteers satisfied. Fritz et al. (2003) recommended, "Extension staff develop and implement strategies to retain, recognize, and develop volunteers" (para. 21).

Recruitment and retention are two of the most important aspects of volunteer administration. Smith and Finley (2004) concluded it was logical to start recruitment with individuals whose children were in 4-H, since 60% of the current volunteers began because of their youths' involvement. However, Culp III et al. (2005) implied educators should recruit beyond parents. An additional place to find volunteers for 4-H are at locations beyond 4-H where current 4-H volunteers are providing their service. Two areas identified by Lobley (2008) were religious organizations and scout programs. Since most volunteers are female, Wolford et al. (2001) also implied efforts should be made to recruit more male volunteers. Clary et al. (1998) recommended recruiting volunteers in a targeted manner with each individual's motivation in mind.

To determine individual motivations, Clary et al. (1998) developed the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI). The VFI measures the motivational functions of values, understanding, career, social, protective, and enhancement (Clary et al., 1998). Houle et al. (2005) recommended volunteers should be given the VFI prior to volunteering to determine which motivations of the individual should be matched to corresponding roles within the organization. Studies using the VFI for 4-H volunteers, found values are the most common motivational function across all populations included in their studies (Eason et al., 2011; Maley et al., 2015; Schmiesing et al., 2005).

Beyond 4-H volunteers, other studies have used the VFI to assess volunteer motivations for their organizations. Social, values, and understanding functions were reported as motivations for studies with retirees (Brayley et al., 2014; Okun et al., 1998). Busser and Caruthers (2010), in their study on little league coaches, found protective, understanding, values, and social factors were motivations. They also concluded a majority of coaches in the study were motivated by the desire to help children, a theme also found with studies of 4-H volunteers. Finally, age seems to play a factor in VFI scores. Okun and Schultz (2003) found there were age differences among motivation to volunteer for the International Habitat for Humanity organization. Brayley et al. (2014) identified continuity as an additional element found in older adults who volunteer through retirement. Okun and Schultz (2003) reported the social function was related to age, while the enhancement, protective, and values functions were unrelated. Clary et al. (1998) also reported this in their initial findings of the VFI.

Theoretical Framework

The use of the VFI as an instrument for the identification of volunteer motivations is rooted in Maslow's (1943) Hierarchy of Needs, McClelland's (1961) trichotomy of needs, and Katz's functionalist theory according to Clary et al. (1998). Maslow (1943) focused on basic human needs: physiological, safety, love, esteem, and self-actualization, and asserts these needs must be met for motivation to occur. McClelland (1961) focused on the psychological and sociological explanation of motivations, achievement, affiliation, and power. These two theories served as the basis for the Katz (1960) functionalist theory.

Functionalist theory describes underlying functions in an individual's motivation (Katz, 1960). Katz (1960) stated, "If an understanding of the nature of attitudes and the conditions for their change depends upon a knowledge of their functional bases, then it becomes of first importance to identify the underlying motivational patterns" (p. 201). Katz (1960) included four functions in this theory: utilitarian, ego-defensive, value-expressive, and knowledge. The utilitarian function focuses on the greater good, while the ego-defensive function is the individual protecting themselves from who they are (Katz, 1960). The value-expressive function reflects an individual's personally held beliefs. Finally, the knowledge function works in individuals to find meaning, bring order to chaos, and create cognitive meaning (Katz, 1960).

Although Katz (1960) discussed the necessity of determining motivational patterns, he did not provide an instrument.

The VFI assumes, "the motivations underlying volunteer activity can be identified and measured with some degree of precision" (Clary et al., 1998, p. 1519). Clary et al. (1998) stated, "people can and do perform the same actions in the service of different psychological functions" (p. 1517). This means an individual's motivation is fueled by different needs they possess. The functions included in the VFI are values, understanding, social, career, protective, and enhancement (Clary et al., 1998).

Each of the six functions has its own unique psychological need it fulfills. The values function is the individual expressing and channeling their inner beliefs to help others (Clary et al., 1998). An individual is motivated to volunteer by their understanding if they want to gain knowledge about the organization or their role in the organization (Clary et al., 1998). A volunteer is motivated by their relationships with others when fulfilling the needs of the social function (Clary et al., 1998). Individuals may volunteer to boost a career when fulfilling the career function (Clary et al., 1998). The final two functions included in the VFI are related to the ego. The protective and enhancement functions deal with positive and negative aspects of ego. The protective function is individuals volunteering to protect themselves from their own guilt (Clary et al., 1998). Finally, the growth of volunteers through their time spent volunteering fulfills the enhancement function (Clary et al., 1998).

Purpose and Objectives

Since there is a decline in adult volunteers in the Texas 4-H youth development program, an investigation of possible approaches for recruitment and retention of volunteers is warranted. With demographic characteristics and volunteer motivations being recommended as tools to be used for recruitment and retention in volunteer programs, these two factors were the focus of this study. The purpose of this study was to assess factors affecting adult volunteers' motivation to volunteer in the Texas 4-H youth development program. The following research objectives guided the implementation of this study:

1. Describe the demographic characteristics of current volunteers in the Texas 4-H youth development program.
2. Identify volunteer opportunities in 4-H project areas and other youth service organizations of current Texas 4-H volunteers.
3. Identify motivational factors of Texas 4-H volunteers utilizing the Volunteer Functions Inventory.

Methods

The design of this study was descriptive in nature and sought to describe a current group of individuals (Fraenkel et al., 2015). The target population was all Texas 4-H volunteers. However, the accessible population was all volunteers enrolled on the state listserv at the time of this study (N = 6,287). We did not have direct contact with Texas 4-H volunteers, therefore all communication for this study was carefully managed by the state 4-H director at the direction of the researchers.

Online survey methods were used for data collection with this study. Following survey recommendations of Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2014), the accessible population was contacted five times by the state 4-H director. Upon IRB approval from Texas Tech University, an initial email invitation was sent via the state volunteer listserv with an included link to the Qualtrics™ questionnaire. Four reminder emails were sent, each two weeks apart, with varying messages soliciting response. At the conclusion of data collection, a total of 1,225 responses were collected for a participation rate of 19.48%. Since the participation rate was below 85%, a comparison of scores from early respondents to late respondents was made to control for nonresponse error (Lindner et al., 2001). Late respondents were

defined as those responding after the second email contact. The comparison resulted in no significant differences between the two groups. Even though no differences were found, the researchers recognize participation was low and caution should be exercised when attempting to generalize the results of this study beyond those who responded to this study. However, demographic characteristics are thoroughly identified and, in this instance, Fraenkel et al. (2015) state "interested others can judge for themselves the degree to which any findings apply" (p. 105).

The online questionnaire used in this study contained 15 demographic questions and 30 Likert-type questions making up the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) created by Clary et al. (1998). Demographic questions included classification of gender, ethnicity, socioeconomic status, children enrolled in 4-H, past 4-H involvement, and time spent volunteering. The VFI was used to measure six motivation functions with permission from the developers (Clary et al., 1998). The VFI uses five questions to measure each motivation function on a scale of 1 = N*ot at all Important/Accurate* to 7 = *Extremely Important/Accurate*. Functions measured include protective, values, career, social, understanding, and enhancement.

Protective function questions include items such as, "By volunteering I feel less lonely," and "Volunteering is a good escape from my own troubles." Items which measured the values function included, "I feel it is important to help others," and "I feel compassion toward people in need." Items for the career function contained, "Volunteering experience will look good on my résumé," and "I can make new contacts that might help my business or career." The social function includes items such as, "My friends volunteer," and "People I'm close to want me to volunteer." Questions for the understanding function were comprised of, "I can explore my own strengths," and "I can learn more about the cause for which I am working." The final function, enhancement, included items such as, "Volunteering makes me feel important," and "Volunteering makes me feel needed."

A panel of three experts at Texas Tech University was used to establish content and face validity of the questionnaire used for this study. Panelists had experience in 4-H youth development activities in the state and were familiar with research in this area. The panel helped tailor demographic questions to Texas 4-H youth development volunteers and deemed the VFI appropriate for the purpose of this study. Reliability of the VFI was well established through several studies completed by Clary et al. (1998). The following Cronbach's alpha coefficients were previously reported for each function and were acceptable for this study: career $\alpha = .89$, enhancement $\alpha = .84$, social $\alpha = .83$, understanding $\alpha = .81$, protective $\alpha = .81$, and values $\alpha = .80$.

All data were compiled in Qualtrics™ and exported to SPSS version 24.0 for analysis. Basic descriptive statistics such as frequencies and percentages were calculated and reported for the objectives analyzed in this study. Scores from the five questions corresponding with each of the six functions were averaged for each participant. Average scores reflect the level of motivation each function has for each individual respondent. Overall averages were then calculated to reflect motivation levels for each function for all participants surveyed.

Findings

The first objective was to describe demographic characteristics of current volunteers in the Texas 4-H youth development program. Volunteers in Texas 4-H are mainly female (f = 925, 76.6%), white (non-Hispanic) (f = 1,076, 89.9%), and married (f = 1,080, 89.6%). They are most often educated to the level of a bachelor's degree (f = 485, 40.2%). Volunteer ages ranged from 18-81 years old, while respondents most frequently reported being 41-50 years old (f = 519, 42.4%). Table 1 presents a full demographic breakdown for survey participants in this study.

Table 1

Demographic Characteristics of Texas 4-H Volunteers

Characteristic	*n*	*f*	%
Gender	1,208		
Female		925	76.6
Male		283	23.4
Age	1,090		
18-20		2	0.2
21-30		16	1.3
31-40		282	23.0
41-50		519	42.4
51-60		256	20.9
61-70		89	7.3
71-81		26	2.1
Ethnicity	1,197		
White (non-Hispanic)		1,076	89.9
Hispanic		80	6.7
Other		27	2.3
African American		10	0.8
Asian		4	0.3
Marital Status	1,206		
Married		1,080	89.6
Divorced		68	5.6
Never Married		36	3.0
Widowed		22	1.8
Education	1,205		
High School Diploma		255	21.2
Associate's Degree		162	13.4
Bachelor's Degree		485	40.2
Master's Degree		259	21.5
Doctorate		44	3.7

Note. n shows the number of Texas 4-H volunteers who responded to each item, not the total respondents of the study.

Participants also identified information about their 4-H backgrounds. Table 2 shows the majority of volunteers had children enrolled in the 4-H program (n = 1,015, 84.0%). However, most volunteers had no prior history themselves as youth members in the 4-H program (n = 642, 53.1%). The parents of the volunteers were also not past members of the program (n = 887, 73.4%). Additionally, volunteers reported they had only been serving for one to five years (n = 499, 41.3%).

Table 2

4-H Demographic Characteristics of Texas 4-H Volunteers

Characteristic	*n*	*f*	%
Children Enrolled in 4-H	1,209		
Yes		1,015	84.0
No		194	16.0
4-H Membership	1,209		
Yes		567	46.9
No		642	53.1

Table 2

4-H Demographic Characteristics of Texas 4-H Volunteers, continued…

Parents Membership in 4-H	1,208		
Yes		321	26.6
No		887	73.4
Years as a 4-H Volunteer	1,209		
Less than 1		135	11.2
1-5		499	41.3
6-10		259	21.4
11-15		127	10.5
Greater than 15		189	15.6

Note. n shows the number of Texas 4-H volunteers who responded to each item, not the total respondents of the study.

The second objective was to identify volunteer opportunities in 4-H project areas and other youth service organizations of current Texas 4-H volunteers. 4-H project areas include: agriculture and livestock, family and community health, leadership and citizenship, natural resources, and STEM. Respondents had the opportunity to identify which project area(s) they currently volunteer with or have volunteered for in the past. Volunteerism in the agriculture and livestock project area was reported most frequently (f = 705, 57.6%). Volunteerism in the STEM project area was reported least frequently (f = 251, 20.5%). Table 3 summarizes participant volunteerism for all Texas 4-H project areas.

Table 3

Volunteerism Frequencies in Texas 4-H Project Areas

4-H Project Areas	*f*	*%*
Agriculture and Livestock	705	57.6
Family and Community Health	519	42.4
Leadership and Citizenship	480	39.2
Natural Resources	312	25.5
Science, Technology, Engineering, and Math	251	20.5

Note. Participants could select multiple project areas.

Other youth/service organizations Texas 4-H volunteers participate in included: church/religious organizations, fair board/livestock show associations, youth sports programs, booster clubs, parent teacher organizations (PTO/PTA/PTC), boy scouts, girl scouts, school board, FFA, and child advocacy programs. Table 4 shows other organizations volunteered for by participants besides Texas 4-H. Texas 4-H volunteers most frequently reported volunteering for church/religious organizations (f = 687, 56.1%), while volunteering for school boards was reported the least (f = 38, 3.1%). A fraction of participants indicated they volunteered in no other organizations (f = 178, 14.5%).

Table 4

Volunteer Service in Other Youth Organizations Reported by Texas 4-H Volunteers

Youth/Service Organizations	*f*	%
Church/Religious Organization	687	56.1
Other	330	26.9
Fair Board/Livestock Show Association	324	26.4
Parent Teacher Organizations (PTO/PTA/PTC)	313	25.6
Youth Sports Program	284	23.2

Table 4

Volunteer Service in Other Youth Organizations Reported by Texas 4-H Volunteers, continued…

Booster Club	263	21.5
FFA	244	19.9
Child Advocacy Programs	73	6.0
Boy Scouts	68	5.6
Girl Scouts	65	5.3
School Board	38	3.1

Note. Participants could select multiple organizations.

The final objective of this study was to identify motivational factors of Texas 4-H volunteers utilizing the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI). Looking at individual questions, the two highest averages were found in the values function. The highest average (M = 6.32, SD = 1.12) was found with, "I feel it is important to help others," and the second highest average (M = 6.03, SD = 1.40) with, "I can do something for a cause that is important to me." The lowest average (M = 1.91, SD = 1.49) was part of the protective function, "Doing volunteer work relieves me of some of the guilt over being more fortunate than others." The second lowest average (M = 2.07, SD = 1.73) was found in the career function, "Volunteering can help me get my foot in the door at a place I would like to work."

Sixty-six respondents (n = 1,159) were removed prior to calculation of overall means for the six VFI functions due to incomplete responses. Collectively, the values function questions had higher averages and the career function questions had the lowest averages. Table 5 reports the overall mean and standard deviation of each VFI function. The highest average was found in the values function (M = 5.79, SD = 1.08). This was followed by the understanding function (M = 4.88, SD = 1.53). The lowest average was found in the career function (M = 2.32, SD = 1.56) while the second lowest was found in the protective function (M = 2.60, SD = 1.39) of the VFI.

Table 5

Average VFI Scores for Participating Texas 4-H Volunteers (N = 1,159)

VFI Function	*M*	*SD*
Values	5.79	1.08
Understanding	4.88	1.53
Social	3.89	1.56
Enhancement	3.66	1.64
Protective	2.60	1.39
Career	2.32	1.56

Note. Scale: 1 = N*ot at All Important/Accurate*, 7 = E*xtremely Important/Accurate*.

Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations

From objective one, we concluded volunteers in Texas 4-H fit demographic profiles of volunteers in other studies. Many studies have found individuals who volunteer for 4-H are mainly female, white, college educated, and rural living (Culp III et al., 2005; Rohs, 1986; Smith & Finley, 2004; Wolford et al., 2001). Additionally, Fritz et al. (2003) found a majority of volunteers had children in 4-H. These findings are supported with findings in our research.

Culp III et al. (2005) found only half of volunteers had prior membership in the 4-H program. In our study, 73% percent of volunteers had no previous membership in 4-H. This shows a trend of decreased

prior enrollment of 4-H volunteers. Volunteers may be generations removed from the program; however, they are involving their youth in 4-H and in turn becoming involved themselves. This new involvement could be due to increased program opportunities and reach of the organization. With over 80% of volunteers having children in the program, the individual's involvement in the program could be partly due to their children's membership. Additionally, most individuals reported only volunteering for one to five years. This low number of accumulated years could be due to new volunteer recruitment in the program.

When identifying project areas 4-H volunteers participated in, we concluded the majority of respondents volunteered for the agriculture and livestock project areas. The number of volunteers for a project area did not necessarily reflect the number of youths in the project area. Family and community health had the most participation in 2020, however this area was ranked second in volunteers (Texas 4-H, 2020). Additional recruiting efforts may be necessary for project areas where volunteer numbers do not reflect youth participation. As was found with other studies, 4-H volunteers were most likely to volunteer their time with church organizations in addition to 4-H service (Culp III et al., 2005). Other popular programs included fair board and livestock associations and parent teacher organizations. These other programs may be a source of additional volunteers for 4-H. Since only a fraction of volunteers indicated they did not volunteer for any other organization, it could be concluded these participants care about their community and building the youth in the community through more than just the 4-H program.

In the final objective, motivation to volunteer was assessed by each question of the VFI and the six functions of the VFI. Individuals were most motivated by feeling it is important to help others and they can do something for a cause important to them. Texas 4-H volunteers most likely spend time volunteering because they like to help others and they believe in the 4-H cause. Volunteers were least motivated by volunteering to relieve themselves of guilt and getting their foot in the door at a place they might like to work. Texas 4-H volunteers do not see the 4-H program as a career enhancement and do not wish to focus on the program as a job. Additionally, they do not volunteer due to guilt.

Examining the VFI functions highlighted individuals are most motivated by the values and understanding function, while they are least motivated by the career and protective functions. We concluded; individuals are most likely motivated by their humanitarian efforts to help others and their need to gain knowledge of the organization. Other 4-H studies also identified values as a top motivation function (Eason et al., 2011; Schmeising et al., 2005). Texas 4-H volunteers are generations removed from the 4-H program, and because of this, they need to learn more about their roles in the organization and the mission of the 4-H program.

The career and protective functions are least motivating to Texas 4-H volunteers. Volunteers do not want to work for the 4-H organization nor see career benefits as a goal in their motivation to serve 4-H. Additionally, volunteers do not serve 4-H out of guilt or protection from their ego. Individuals do not volunteer for the program to gain career opportunities or access to jobs in the organization. Ultimately, Texas 4-H volunteers are motivated by their humanitarian and altruistic efforts to help others in causes they care about.

Based on the conclusions and implications of this study, recommendations for practice emerged. In this study, most volunteers reported only having volunteered for a short time and a lack of prior history with 4-H. Due to this, it is recommended volunteer and extension administrators directly ask individuals to become 4-H volunteers. Also, volunteer recruitment should focus on more than just the parent and mom groups currently involved in 4-H, as 16% of current volunteers did not have youth in the program. Extensions administrators should look beyond alumni groups, as over half of the volunteers in this study did not have previous ties to the program as youth. The identification of groups where 4-H volunteers also currently spend time volunteering should occur to create volunteer campaigns matching their values.

Diversifying the group of individuals beyond parent and alumni groups will increase reach of the program and enhance youth engagement experiences.

Clary et al. (1998) indicated recruitment and retention should be targeted to an individual's motivation. Since values and understanding were the two highest motivations, volunteer administrators should focus on an individual's values and their understanding of the organization for recruitment and retention in the program. Volunteers should be notified of serving opportunities which fit their values and the opportunities within 4-H to support other causes of the volunteer's interests. Volunteers who support 4-H to serve others and the causes they care about should be reminded of the help they are providing to members and administrators. One way to retain Texas 4-H volunteers is expressing how important it is to the organization to help others, while also expressing the ways the volunteer has already helped others.

Volunteer administrators should also build opportunities for volunteers to enhance their understanding of the organization's mission. Most individuals have no prior experience in the program, yet they have youth involved in 4-H. Extension and volunteer administrators should provide opportunities for volunteers to learn about their role in the organization and the mission of the organization. Volunteers should be given the opportunity to gain information through many avenues such as websites, information sessions, and one-on-one meetings. Investing in our volunteers' knowledge base is an investment in the organization. Once volunteers understand the scope and opportunities youth have in 4-H, they may invite more youth and volunteers to the program.

Additionally, volunteers do not serve 4-H to scope career possibilities or to relieve guilt. It is unnecessary to inform volunteers of the career opportunities in 4-H, unless they have inquired into the possibility. In order to build lasting, sustainable relationships among volunteers and the 4-H organization, volunteer administrators should refrain from the use of "guilt-tripping" individuals to serve the program.

This study presented a comprehensive description of motivations identified in volunteers of the Texas 4-H program. As a result of this effort, the opportunity for further research arises. This study should be replicated in other states, regions, and nationally to compare top motivation functions across 4-H volunteers in the nation. Program affiliation was considered a demographic characteristic in our study; however, future research should look at affiliation as a motivation to volunteer, as a majority of volunteers had youth in the program.

Most respondents identified neither themselves nor their parents were involved in the program as youth. This gap in program involvement is concerning while also intriguing. Concerning due to the lack of prior knowledge of programs and project areas the 4-H organization provides. Intriguing for the reasons of their enrollment of children and how these youth became aware of the program. Research should be conducted on this gap of program involvement and the implications in awareness of the 4-H organization. Finally, researchers should determine how volunteers became aware of the organization and why they chose to become involved or enroll their children in the 4-H youth development program.

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