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Development of 4-H youth leadership skills: a retrospective approach with emerging adults

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Development of 4-H youth leadership skills:
A retrospective approach with emerging adults

by

Ashley N. Kinkade

A thesis submitted to the graduate faculty
in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of

MASTER OF SCIENCE

Major: Human Development and Family Studies

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ABSTRACT

Guided by Lerner's (2005) positive youth development theory and Kouzes and Posner's (2002) five fundamental practices for effective leadership, this qualitative investigation describes how emerging adult (18-25 years) aged alumni of Iowa 4-H internalize, apply, describe and use the leadership skills they gained as youth participants in the Iowa 4-H program. Seven themes arose when discussing how Iowa 4-H alumni describe and internalize effective leadership, including leading by example and encouraging others as the two most prevalent themes. Four additional themes arose as knowledge and skills Iowa 4-H alumni possess and attribute to their 4-H experience, including the feeling of mastery through multiple, early experiences. It was also found that alumni of Iowa 4-H use their leadership skills in multiple ways. They are able to build effective teams, communicate in oral and written forms and manage their time. The findings of this study inform stakeholders of the positive youth development programming happening across the state as well as provide perspective to other programs regarding how Iowa provides leadership development and the success of adults who experienced that programming.
CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION

As an educational program that promotes youth development, 4-H in Iowa began between 1890 and 1900. Prior to that decade, college educators were reaching beyond campus to bring the latest scientific agricultural information to farming families. Educators soon recognized the instructional needs of young people, consequently forming a club structure in school settings as a means of increasing agricultural education for youth (History of 4-H, 2014).

Developed in 1902 as a means to connect public school education to country life, the first 4-H club was formed in a public school setting. Girls participating in these clubs worked on home-based projects whereas boys focused on agriculture and farming projects. In 1907, Iowa county school superintendents from Wright and Page Counties, O.H. Benson and Jessie Field Shambaugh, pioneers of 4-H, began to use a three-leaf clover with an “H” on each leaf symbolizing the words head, heart, and hands to represent the youths' work. This symbol and these words would provide the underpinnings of 4-H, since youth would be working “out of hearts, hands, and heads” in their communities. By 1911, clubs were being organized across the United States. A fourth “H” standing for “health” was added to this national emblem, now depicted as a four-leaf clover. With the passage of the Smith-Lever Act in 1914, the Cooperative Extension System and the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) nationalized 4-H as a program that has since increased its mission beyond a focus on farming skills for rural youth. Today, 4-H is administered by the National Institute of Food and Agriculture, with the mission of “engaging youth to reach their fullest potential while advancing the field of youth development” (History of Iowa 4-H, 2014). Iowa State University (ISU) Extension and Outreach is the designated land grant university
for Iowa and serves as the support system for the statewide 4-H program. As a key program in ISU’s outreach activities, 4-H currently serves one in five youth under the age of 18 in current programs (Iowa State University Extension and Outreach Strategic Plan, 2014). Specifically, Iowa 4-H members in 4th through 12th grade have experiential learning opportunities with caring adults to reach their full potential under the positive youth development framework. According to the 4-H Equation (see Figure 1, Iowa State University Cooperative Extension Service, 2013), one critical component of youth development is 4-H's focus on the development of leadership skills, which was the focus of this study.

A systematic program evaluation data collection process is in place by Iowa 4-H staff to monitor and foster the development of program outcomes of 4-H members. However, the data are only used to inform constituents of the current progress and short-term behavior changes of a specific program. These assessments cover various outcomes, depending on the year, including knowledge gained through Food Safety Quality Assurance (FSQA), contribution to community, or knowledge gained through participation in a specific Science, Technology, Engineering, and Mathematics (STEM) program. The assessment collects data from youth currently enrolled in a 4-H program and their outcomes for that particular program.

Leadership skill development is a key goal of the national 4-H program (National 4-H Council, 2013), making it important for the Iowa 4-H program efforts in leadership development to be understood and evaluated. A top priority of Iowa 4-H is to be providing a program that lays the foundation for the development of effective future leaders during adolescence and into adulthood (ISU Extension and Outreach Strategic Plan, 2013).
Studies in other states have researched the development of other key skills, such as citizenship and communication outcomes that 4-H alumni exhibit as emerging adults (Peterson, Gerhard, Hunter, Marek, Phillips, & Titcomb, 2001), as well as the application of these skills as adults (Flynn, Frick, & Steele, 2010), but there is a lack of current research focused on Iowa 4-H alumni and their internalized leadership skills gained from being a 4-H member. One of the outcomes Iowa 4-H hopes to provide as a result of programming is development of “effective leaders” (see Figure 1, Cooperative Extension Iowa State University, 2013). Therefore, it is imperative for staff and constituents to better understand the leadership skills developed by former 4-H members and in what contexts they apply these skills as emerging adults, as they transition from high school into work or post-secondary settings.

Using positive youth development theory (Lerner, 2005) and focusing on the essential knowledge and skills that make effective leadership possible (Northouse, 2013), this qualitative investigation will identify leadership skills emerging adults gained from the 4-H program and how they use them in everyday life through conducting individual interviews with Iowa 4-H alumni using a phenomenological design. Specifically, this investigation aimed to discover three things:

1. How Iowa 4-H alumni describe and/or internalize effective leadership in their lives today;
2. What particular leadership knowledge and skills Iowa 4-H alumni possess and attribute to their 4-H experience; and
3. How Iowa 4-H alumni use leadership knowledge and skills obtained through 4-H in their everyday lives.
CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

This study was guided by Lerner and Learner’s (2005) positive youth development theory and Kouzes and Posner's (2002) 5 Fundamental Practices of Effective Leaders, both outlined below. Chapter Two provides the current research and history of positive youth development theory, and understanding of 4-H and youth leadership development and closes with leadership development in emerging adulthood.

Positive Youth Development Theory

In the early 1990's, a new vision and vocabulary for discussing young people emerged. Framed by the developmental systems theory, positive youth development (PYD) theory converged to form a set of ideas that focus on enabling youth as resources to be developed, rather than problems to be managed (Lerner et al., 2005). Experts view PYD as an overarching framework that promotes strengthening youth as community assets and helping youth realize their full potential (Gallagher, Stanley, Shearer, & Mosca, C. 2005).

Youth development programs should utilize this framework, commonly referred to as the 5 C's, to instill ideals of competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring (Lerner et al., 2005). These concepts assert that every young person has the potential for successful, healthy development and that every youth possess the capacity to develop skills related to leadership. This strength-based viewpoint arose in competition with the deficit view of human behavior and development, especially in regards to adolescent development (Lerner et al., 2005).

PYD is the guiding framework for 4-H youth development programs across the United States because of the theory’s emphasis on building skills rather than focusing on what skills youth do not possess (Lerner et al., 2005). National 4-H Council used this theory
to conduct a longitudinal investigation, *The 4-H Study of Positive Youth Development* (Lerner et al., 2005). This investigation determined that out-of-school learning, leadership experiences, and adult mentoring give 4-H youth the ability to excel beyond their classmates in leadership, communication, and civic engagement. Partnered with service, their study found leadership to be the leading ideology in helping youth create their identities as emerging adults in communities through one of the C's—Contribution (Lerner et al., 2013). As the only longitudinal positive youth development study, this study is highly regarded in the field of youth development. This study supported the positive youth development framework as an effective strategy for developing youth skills. However, little is known about the sustainability and application of those skills once youth transition into the challenges, opportunities, and roles of emerging adulthood. Thus, the current study focused on the application of leadership skills emerging adults learned in 4-H, a PYD focused organization.

**Defining Youth Leadership**

Since all youth have the potential to lead, leadership skills can be developed through both non-formal and formal activities (Klau, 2006). Many studies suggest educational programs in which youth learn through experience to develop leadership skills. Through hands-on activities, youth are able to reach their potential through experience (Klau, 2006; Lerner, 2005). 4-H is a program that provides this experience through hands-on, experiential learning opportunities. Yet, the concept of youth leadership remains ambiguous. Some youth workers define it as involvement of youth in responsible, challenging actions that meet genuine needs through developing plans and using decision-making skills (Kress, 2006).
As one of the five major outcomes supported and encouraged through the Iowa 4-H program, staff members define youth leadership as “the ability to influence and support others in a positive manner toward a common goal” on the Iowa 4-H program website (Iowa State University Extension and Outreach, 2014). It is acknowledged in 4-H that leadership opportunities take many forms, including elected or appointed positions, or serving on committees. According to PYD theory and framework, there are not a set of specific leadership skills all 4-H members should obtain because their current skills should be built upon instead of trying to reach the same target for each individual (Lerner, 2005). However, all youth should understand roles, attitudes, tasks, and functions necessary for effective leadership through the Iowa 4-H program, regardless of if they are enacting those skills (Leadership Opportunities, 2013). Furthermore, it has been shown that youth leaders should be held to different standards than adult leaders (Kress, 2006; Van Linden & Fertman, 1998). Since Iowa 4-H Youth Development prides itself on using PYD theory to produce productive adults, it needs to be understood how alumni of the Iowa 4-H program are applying leadership skills in their lives as emerging adults.

4-H and Youth Leadership Development

Across the nation, 4-H is an innovator in developing youth leadership and decision-making skills to prepare individuals for the future (Leadership and Personal Development, 2014). As a community of individuals, seven million youth across the nation are learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills through 4-H programs (“National 4-H Council Impact Report,” 2013). Research supports that when youth are thoughtfully engaged with caring adults, there is tremendous potential for youth skill development and growth through participation in non-formal settings like 4-H clubs and activities (4-H Programs, 2014). Even
though programs vary from state to state, national research such as the National 4-H Impact Assessment (2000) showcases the ability for young people to develop as leaders, regardless of the state. This national report indicated 92% of 4-H members identify development of leadership skills as a primary outcome of the program. The outcomes found in this assessment are consistent with recent state reports, such as the 2010 study conducted with Montana 4-H alumni. This study showcased participation in a leadership opportunity as the strongest factor for success in adulthood. Fifty-six percent of study participants responded “much” on a scale of “not at all” to “much” when asked to rate “How much 4-H helped them in developing leadership skills” (Flynn et al., 2010).

The Iowa 4-H program provides youth in 4th-12th grade opportunities to interact with caring adults to develop communication, citizenship, leadership, and learning skills, a process known as “learning by doing,” through which youth become effective leaders and productive citizens. Using a PYD approach, caring adults assist youth in further developing these skills (Lerner, 2005), without the youth being aware of the skill development. This unawareness leads to a greater willingness to participate in leadership activities (van Linden & Fertman, 1998). Researchers van Linden and Fertman (1998) propose three distinct stages of individual youth leadership development, occurring at varying rates. These three stages are known as awareness, interaction, and mastery. During the first stage, awareness, young people do not actively think about leadership skills. In the second stage, interaction, the young person has had adequate experience to reflect on and explore their leadership skills. In the third and final stage, mastery, the young person focuses on improving his or her leadership capacity. This model created by van Linden and Fertman (1998) addresses differences in the way youth and adults define leadership. This leadership skill development
model is used with youth because adults and youth define leadership differently. While youth will typically view leadership in a group context where leadership is collaborative, adults tend to view leadership as taking charge (van Linden & Fertman, 1998). Overall, the PYD theory is a comprehensive way of thinking about the development of adolescents and the factors that facilitate the successful transition from adolescence to adulthood (Butts, Bazemore, & Meroe, 2010), yet this transition is often difficult to observe due to the complexity in the number of various roles individuals fill as they transition into various roles and responsibilities.

Due to the differences in how youth and adults view leadership (Kress, 2006; MacNeil, 2006), it is important to broaden our understanding of the leadership experiences youth have while in 4-H and how they apply these skills in adulthood. As 4-H members, youth are not instructed in particular leadership skills, but rather gain these skills by holding roles in their club, community, and state organizations through working with peers and caring adults. Since the 4-H program expects effective leadership to be an outcome (see Figure 1), it is critical to further examine Iowa 4-H alumni under the standards of effective adult leadership knowledge and skills.

**Defining Emerging Adulthood**

The transitional phase from late teens to early 20s, known as emerging adulthood, can be full of changes in residences, relationships, financial status, education, and community involvement. Individuals in emerging adulthood will experience a variety of factors that affect their behavior and decisions (Wood, 1995). Emerging Adulthood researcher Jeffery Arnett (2005) conducted research among this population to understand the transitional period and implications for development of emerging adults. While other studies have focused on
the life skills development of 4-H alumni in college (Anderson, Bruce, & Mouton, 2010), there is no research to support emerging adults who may be in others roles. As this age group is exploring work and forming their identities, it is important to understand what leadership skills and knowledge with which they are entering these transitions in order to best understand their internalization of skills.

**Defining Leadership in Emerging Adulthood**

The public commonly associates adult leadership with goal achievement, interaction of influence, and changing organizational structure (Lassey, 1976). Leadership, for the purpose of this study, is defined as a complex process where an individual influences a group to achieve a common goal (Northouse, 2013). Since leadership itself is a complex phenomenon, it is not sufficient to define in isolation but there is a need to identify what characteristics or practices constitute effective leadership. Kouzes and Posner (2002) constructed a model of five fundamental practices that enable adult leaders to accomplish tasks: (1) model the way, (2) inspire a shared vision, (3) challenge the process, (4) enable others to act, and (5) encourage the heart. These five leadership practices are the characteristics identified for effective leaders in adulthood.

First, to *model the way*, leaders need to be clear to others about their values and philosophy surrounding leadership. They crystallize their opinion and express it to others. They model an example of effective leadership through their behaviors (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). For example, research conducted with Virginia’s 4-H residential camp program demonstrates college-aged counselors are positive role models for youth campers without the counselors being aware of the impact (Garst & Johnson, 2005).
Second, effective leaders *inspire a shared vision.* Effective leaders create a compelling vision to guide behavior of others. They visualize positive outcomes and effectively communicate them to others. Leaders listen to others and challenge them to act (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). One way Iowa 4-H attempts to inspire a shared vision is by sending four high-school-aged youth to the National 4-H Conference in Washington, D.C. annually. This week-long conference allows youth to address public issues from their communities and communicate those issues to representatives from federal agencies with the goal of positively impacting their home communities (National 4-H Conference, 2013).

Third, effective leaders change the status quo and step into unfamiliar situations through *challenging the process.* This practice involves being willing to innovate, grow, and improve community processes. Effective leaders are willing to take risks and learn from mistakes (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). In a qualitative study conducted with 48 members and 25 adult leaders in New York 4-H clubs, Gregorie (2004) suggested that clubs with caring adults provide opportunities for 4-H'ers to learn and grow from their successes and failures. This club model creates positive experiences for youth and deep outcomes because youth learn how to express their opinions to improve communities.

Fourth, effective leaders are good at working with people. They *enable others to act* through collaboration and building trust. They value teamwork and help others to make choices. They create environments that allow others to feel good about their contributions to their communities (Kouzes & Posner, 2002). 4-H members gain skills in enabling others through participation in a youth/adult partnership (Youth Adult Partnerships, 2013). Youth/adult partnerships happen through officer positions, state level positions and other project based formats.
Finally, the last skill in the Kouzes and Posner (2002) model is to encourage the heart. Effective leaders encourage others by rewarding team members for their accomplishments both individually and as a group. They give praise for jobs completed well. Through partnership with caring adults in 4-H, youth gain the skill of encouraging others when they participate events (Flynn et al., 2010). In recent studies using Kouzes and Posner's (2002) model, young adult principals encouraged the heart by building a community in schools through connections with others. Themes found in this mixed-method study included communication, providing recognition, highlighting accomplishments, and making personal connections (Goewey, 2012).

Overall, the Kouzes and Posner (2002) model emphasizes behaviors effective adult leaders demonstrate and outlines effective leadership qualities. Since youth and adult leadership is expressed differently, it is important to understand how emerging adults who were once engaged in 4-H are now effective leaders as adults.

**Conclusion and Present Study**

Iowa 4-H stakeholders make the broad assumption that youth are taught leadership skills through participation in the program. Additionally, 4-H seeks to develop effective leaders for the future (www.4-H.org), yet there is little research determining if these outcomes are apparent in 4-H members' lives as emerging adults (Flynn, 2010; Mulroy & Kraimer-Rickaby, 2006). Additionally, there is no research exploring leadership outcomes of Iowa 4-H alumni. This study explored how Iowa 4-H alumni, aged 18-25 years, utilize their leadership skills and knowledge during emerging adulthood, now that they are no longer 4-H members.
The gap in research that inspires this study's particular research questions stems from a need to understand the experiences of former Iowa 4-H youth as they use their leadership skills in everyday life. To best understand Iowa 4-H leadership experiences, the researcher became immersed in rich, descriptive data to deeply explore 4-H alumni’ experiences (Bloomberg et al., 2012). In order to cultivate a description of the shared experience and establish commonality between 4-H alumni, a phenomenological approach was utilized to best understand the experiences of Iowa 4-H alumni. The assumptions of the phenomenological study included: (1) understanding the lived experiences of individuals sharing a common experience, 4-H; and (2) the essence conveys the “what” and “how” of the experience as 4-H alumni. This qualitative investigation focused on investigating the leadership skills emerging adults gained from the 4-H program and understanding how they use these skills. Specifically, the purpose of this phenomenological investigation was three-fold:

1. How Iowa 4-H alumni describe and/or internalize effective leadership in their lives today;

2. What particular leadership knowledge and skills Iowa 4-H alumni possess and attribute to their 4-H experience; and

3. How Iowa 4-H alumni use leadership knowledge and skills obtained through 4-H in their everyday lives.
CHAPTER THREE: METHODOLOGY

The purpose of this study was to better understand experiences of Iowa 4-H alumni in the context of leadership skill development, how Iowa 4-H alumni use their leadership skills, and knowledge in their current lives. It is intended to inform current stakeholders and staff about the leadership development of recent Iowa 4-H alumni and their application of skills and knowledge related to leadership. This chapter presents the overall research design and details necessary to understand how the study fulfills its purpose. The following section includes a rationale for the methodology selected, details on how 4-H alumni were selected, specific details about the research design and an overview of the considerations taken into account for this study.

Research Design

This study's methods include the assumption that an individual's perception is a valuable research asset, an idea previously untapped in related research. In order to best understand the knowledge and skills 18 to 25-year-old 4-H alumni associate with leadership, this qualitative study explored their skills and knowledge. The researcher implemented purposeful sampling to select emerging adults that experienced a common phenomenon (Bloomberg & Volpe, 2012)—participating in Iowa 4-H. This research study included four phases of data collection: (1) development of the demographic and interview questionnaire; (2) recruitment and selection of 4-H alumni; and (3) completion of and transcription of interviews; and (4) the demographic questionnaire.
Procedures

Ethical considerations

Before beginning the study, the researcher received approval for the Institutional Review Board (IRB) (see Appendix A). The research intentions of this study were provided in the informed consent document (see Appendix B), one of which is being kept in a locked file by the research and the other was given to 4-H alumni. For the four 4-H alumni completing the interview via Skype, an online informed consent was completed via Survey Monkey (see Appendix C). All interviews were conducted in a private room with a sign stating “Do not Disturb” on the door.

4-H Alumni Selection. Using an existing alumni database, the Iowa 4-H Foundation identified 326 Iowa 4-H alumni aged 18-25 as potential 4-H alumni for the present study. Upon receiving the Excel file of 4-H alumni from the Iowa 4-H Foundation, the researcher emailed all potential 4-H alumni asking for volunteers if they met the following eligibility criteria: (1) were between the ages of 18 and 25 years, as this is the age of emerging adulthood according to researcher Jeffrey Jensen Arnett (2005); (2) held an officer position in their 4-H club, since this is where youth experience leadership skills most commonly (Cantrell et al., 1989); and (3) been an Iowa 4-H member for a minimum of five years, as this would allow them to experience development through the program. For a copy of the email script, see Appendix D.

Out of the 326 4-H alumni, twenty-seven responded with interest via email after the first attempt. Six 4-H alumni never followed through after the third follow-up with a time to participate. Once interviews were scheduled, one interview was cancelled after two missed
This allowed for a total of twenty 4-H alumni. A description of each 4-H alumni and their pseudonyms is contained in Table 1.

Sample

The researcher collected the extent of 4-H involvement and demographics of each 4-H alumni through a demographic questionnaire (see Appendix G). Data also provided insight into the demographics of the individuals interviewed. Section 1 of the survey explores the level of involvement of each 4-H alumni in 4-H afterschool, clubs, events, and schools. Each 4-H alumni checked their level of involvement on a scale with a four-point scale. A 0 indicates “no,” a 1 means “I was a little involved with this,” 2 means “I was somewhat involved with this,” and 3 means “I was very involved with this.” The data was stored in a Microsoft Excel, which is also the program used to run descriptive statistics for offices held, years in 4-H, county, race, age and gender.

Section 2 of the demographic questionnaire asked 4-H alumni to identify: (1) their current age; (2) number of years in 4-H; and (3) their gender. Next they indicated their county (or counties) of membership and finally checked the offices held during their time as a 4-H alumni. The researcher modified this questionnaire from the instrument used in The National 4-H Impact Assessment (Peterson et al., 2001) in order to provide demographic information and to better understand the level involvement among 4-H alumni. The modifications made from the questionnaire consisted of the addition of Section 1 and rephrasing the levels of involvement to reflect programming offered in Iowa.

All 4-H alumni (100%) identified as being White/Caucasian and 12 of the participants were female and 8 were male. All 4-H alumni had at least 8 years of 4-H involvement, with 95% (19/20) being involved from 4th-12th grade, for a total of 9 years, which is the maximum
number of years an individual can be a 4-H member in the state of Iowa. While not directly asked, multiple 4-H alumni indicated involvement in Clover Kids, a program typically for K-3rd grade youth, prior to being in 4th grade. While many 4-H alumni (50%) were eighteen-years-old, other 4-H alumni ages were twenty-five (20%), twenty (5%), and nineteen (25%) years of age.

Many 4-H alumni held the position of club president at some point over their 4-H career (90%), though two 4-H alumni never held the office (10%). All 4-H alumni held at least three different club offices, with the exception of one 4-H alumni who only held one club office, but held multiple county office positions and served on state 4-H council. During the interview process, the majority of 4-H alumni indicated their terms of office took place in an order of increasing responsibility (e.g., photographer, secretary, vice-president, president), however, some indicated they either took on officer roles out of the typical order, or were elected president before holding another office. A detailed description of each 4-H alumni’s age, gender, years in 4-H, and office held can be found in Table 2.

**Interviewing Process** The researcher set-up individual times with eligible 4-H alumni to partake in a face-to-face or Skype interview using the interview tool (see Appendix E). The researcher asked questions relating to three main themes: (1) their first experiences in 4-H; (2) their leadership knowledge; and (3) experiences related to their use of leadership skills and knowledge. During the interview, answers from the respondents were expanded or clarified by the researcher asking questions such as, “Could you tell me more about ___” or “What do you mean by ___?” The interview was semi-structured to allow flexibility in the order of the questions presented. Qualitative researchers recommend this format for
phenomenological studies as it allows for the 4-H alumni to guide the conversation, rather than the interviewer (Creswell, 2007).

In all, 15 individuals interviewed in person and five 4-H alumni interviewed via Skype. Interviews ranged from 22 minutes to 1 hour and 15 minutes in length. For both in-person and Skype interviews, the door to a private room was closed with a sign that stated “Do Not Disturb” allowing for interview privacy. In both cases a digital recorder captured the interview. The researcher also took notes during and after the interview regarding the setting and body language of the 4-H alumni (see Appendix F). The use of triangulation, obtaining and analyzing data from multiple data sources, ultimately increased the trustworthiness of this study (Glense, 2006).

Each 4-H alumni signed an informed consent document prior to the interview starting (see Appendix B). All 4-H alumni agreed to the terms of the consent form, and signed and dated two copies. The researcher kept one form in a secure, locked cabinet and the 4-H alumni kept the other form. After signing the informed consent document, the 4-H alumni filled out a three-page demographics tool to assist the researcher in understanding their level of participation as a 4-H member (see Appendix G). The interview followed the survey. Following each interview, the researcher placed all materials, including the notes, demographic questionnaire, and consent forms in a locked filing cabinet that is only accessible by the researcher. The researcher coded each interview with a random number, 1-20, to match the survey to the interview. The original Excel sheet matching the codes to the interview and questionnaire are on a private, password-protected computer in the researcher's office, in accordance with IRB.
The researcher recorded each interview using a handheld audio recorder and then transferred the MP3 files to a password-protected secure network after each interview. The recorder creates a separate file for each interview, and the researcher transferred them directly to the computer following each interview to ensure proper organization. After each transfer, the researcher deleted the files from the audio recorder.

Pseudonyms have replaced 4-H alumni names in the transcriptions and in resulting writing. The researcher typed the transcriptions with the aid of *Wreally* (wreally.com) transcription software that features variable-speed MP3 playback, and then stored the transcription in a Microsoft Word file on the researchers’ private password-protected computer. To ensure accurate transcription, the researcher compared each audio file to the final transcription. The researcher will keep interview recordings on the private password-protected computer until successful completion of the researcher’s thesis defense and completion of related publications in order to be able to refer to them, as stated in the IRB documentation.

*Analysis of Interview Questions*

The first step in analyzing the transcript was the development of codes, based on responses matching the three research questions. Using printed copies of the transcripts, the researcher coded down the left hand side with comments indicating “describe,” “use,” “knowledge,” “skill,” or “attribution.” This coding matches the three research questions: (1) How Iowa 4-H alumni *describe* and/or *internalize* effective leadership in their lives today; (2) What particular leadership *knowledge* and *skills* Iowa 4-H alumni possess and *attribute* to their 4-H experience; and (3) How Iowa 4-H alumni *use* leadership knowledge and skills obtained through 4-H in their everyday lives. On the right hand side, the researcher listed
comments regarding the larger suggested themes (see Appendix H). After coding four interviews, the researcher created a chart, categorizing each example by theme and research question (see Appendix I). This process was repeated after every four interviews. This method originates in *The Coding Manual for Qualitative Researchers* (Saldaña, 2009), but the researcher allowed for the flexibility to let themes emerge throughout the remaining interviews. After entering all 20 interviews into this chart, a printed version of this document was analyzed to combine and solidify emergent themes within the data, as Litchman (2010) suggests (see Appendix J). Because much of the data has overlapping ideas and phenomena, the researcher performed a second iteration of this emergent theme analysis before creating an overall outline to guide the writing process (see Appendix K).

Following that coding process, the researcher also found it beneficial to create a separate document with the responses to the question, “and how would you define leadership now?” in order to see if the 4-H alumni’ definition of leadership aligns with that described in the literature review from the Kress (2006) study (see Appendix L).

**Role of the Researcher** The researcher is a white, 24-year old female with a passion for connecting university research and programming to provide effective youth development practice. As a nine-year 4-H'er in rural Iowa, the researcher believes program participation directly enhanced her leadership skills. The researcher also spent two summers employed by Iowa State University Extension and Outreach working with the Iowa State Fair 4-H staff, and currently serves as a 4-H judge. While she believes her time in the 4-H program benefited her leadership skills, she understands not everyone has the same experience. As a researcher, she understands it is her duty to remove personal biases as well as rely on the support of her Plan of Study (POS) and well-rounded committee members to expose biases.
Additionally, due to her passion for the development of a productive educational program that best meets the needs of youth in Iowa, she can separate her own personal experiences from the data in order to gain perspective on the experiences of others to improve the 4-H program.
CHAPTER FOUR: RESULTS

Description of Findings

This qualitative study explored the leadership knowledge and skills Iowa 4-H alumni exhibit in their roles, duties, and responsibilities as emerging adults. A better understanding of their knowledge and skills will enable key stakeholders and staff to provide effective, research based programming to 4-H members across Iowa. Since the Iowa 4-H program intends to produce Productive Citizens, Outstanding Communicators, Effective Leaders, and Successful Learners, it is important to understand the long term outcomes of 4-H participation. This study focused on the 'Effective Leadership' outcome of the 4-H Equation (see Figure 1, Cooperative Extension Service Iowa State University, 2013). Furthermore, this study enables researchers to better understand the specific leadership knowledge and skills Iowa 4-H alumni have in order to fill a gap in research identified by multiple other studies (Gregorie, 2004; Welch, Wallis, & Acadia, 2013).

Defining Leadership. Observing descriptions of how 4-H alumni broadly defined leadership provides perspective on the findings. All 20 4-H alumni expressed that leadership involves “working together as a group” and multiple (8 of 20) 4-H alumni also highlighted the importance of delegating tasks within the group. Six 4-H alumni mentioned ideals revolving around the mindset of leading by example, while five other described situations in which they lead by example but did not explicitly state that is an effective leadership quality. Each definition provided unique attributes based on their personal experiences in regards to leadership, including “…I am a freshman now and if I thought being a leader was being in charge, I wouldn't be doing things on campus” (Nicole).
When 4-H alumni discussed general leadership knowledge, they shared experiences related to the potential for a leader to be an encourager and able to delegate tasks. Nearly every participant described situations where they have viewed a leader being an encourager. These observations include using “specific comments for feedback” (Alexander & Jennifer), “finding success in others” (Kelsey, Derek, & Austin) and “motivating others” (Danielle, Jennifer, & Victoria). 4-H alumni also defined leadership as “sharing the views of others,” (Nicole) “having goals but being willing to listen and discuss,” (Nathan & Ian) and “moving the team in the proper direction with their [the team’s] support” (Eric). Situations in which 4-H alumni mentioned effective leaders are able to delegate tasks include “as a leader, they are inspiring others. Getting them involved with tasks and not dictating” (Derek) and “leaders are not afraid to delegate and make sure they have a plan...it’s not necessarily the people who stand up and talk, but more the person who can delegate effectively” (Nicole).

This results section is organized around the three research questions and the emerging themes that supported these questions. For Research Question 1, when describing and internalizing effective leadership in their lives today, five themes arose related to describing and internalizing: (1) confidence, (2) guiding others, (3) leading by example, (4) oral and written communication, and (5) recognizing when to step up and step back. Two subsequent themes related solely to internalizing: (6) need to encourage others and (7) seeking success.

When exploring the narratives for Research Question 2: What particular leadership knowledge and skills Iowa 4-H alumni possess and attribute to their 4-H experience, the 4-H alumni indicated a wide range of leadership knowledge and skills related to their 4-H experience. Each member possessed individual knowledge regarding leadership and many made comments directly attributing their success in acquiring leadership abilities to 4-H.
Themes presented in this section are (1) generosity; (2) learning facilitation strategies through practice; (3) mastery through multiple, early experiences; and (4) working with adults and peers to accomplish tasks.

Finally, when assessing Research Question 3: How Iowa 4-H alumni use leadership knowledge and skills obtained through 4-H in their everyday lives, the interviews elicited a wide range of uses of leadership knowledge and skills in the everyday lives of Iowa 4-H alumni. Major themes of these leadership knowledge and skills vary because of the diverse roles, duties, and responsibilities emerging adults experience today, therefore this section presents four themes: (1) building effective teams; (2) meeting individuals where they are; (3) oral and written communication; and (4) time management.

The next section is a discussion of the findings with rich descriptions of the experiences, knowledge, and skills 4-H alumni indicated experiencing as alumni of the Iowa 4-H program. Illustrative quotations from the interview transcripts guide the study's findings and provide a better understanding of the phenomena experienced by the 4-H alumni specific to each Research Question and theme detailed above.

**Research Question 1: How do Iowa 4-H alumni describe and/or internalize effective leadership in their lives today?**

In this section, it is important to recognize five themes arose related to effective leadership that were both described and internalized by study 4-H alumni, and two themes arose that individuals internalized, but did not describe as being effective leadership qualities. For that reason, the two leadership skills that were only internalized by 4-H alumni were separated in this section.
Describing and Internalizing

Five themes arose related to describing and internalizing leadership skills described by 4-H alumni. Those themes are (1) confidence, (2) guiding others, (3) leading by example, (4) oral and written communication, and (5) recognizing when to step up and step back.

Theme 1: Confidence

When describing effective leadership, 4-H alumni gave descriptions of leaders as individuals who “have the drive to make a difference in someone else's life,” (Jessica) and “having the capacity to move a team forward to achieve” (Jonathan). Throughout the interviews, both the 4-H alumni' comments and actions showcased their confidence with leadership concepts. Nearly every (14 out of 15) 4-H alumni that interviewed in person shook the researcher's hand upon entering the room where the interview was taking place. This demonstrates their comfort with being in the room may indicate having the confidence to interact in new settings. 4-H alumni mentioned actions they took, such as “not being afraid to go out and ask for what they want” (Sarah), and “I have confidence in my leadership skills because I show my abilities to others in various settings” (Sarah). 4-H alumni know “they need to be confident and [know] what they [team members] expect. Otherwise no one is ever going to believe in what you do” (Alexander). Additionally, each 4-H alumni felt comfortable taking the lead on projects during coursework, internships and in the work environments they are currently engaged in based on their current roles and responsibilities. Many 4-H alumni had been appointed to or awarded leadership roles and opportunities on campus, and those 4-H alumni who were in their first semester of college believe they were prepared for leadership roles. Two 4-H alumni, who were in the first month of their first semester, have already applied for positions with campus organizations
that provide leadership opportunities (Jonathan & Jessica). Another first year student had recently been elected president of their hall council (Kaitlyn). Second and third year college students confidently discussed their accomplishments on sorority and fraternity committees, campus homecoming and other campus wide organizations (Alexander, Victoria, Austin, & Derek). Three stated they were “chosen for leadership positions on campus because they are good leaders” (Nicole, Alexander, & Ian). This shows they are confident leaders in their environments and also supports the Iowa 4-H definition of effective leadership outcomes that 4-H members are both elected and volunteer for leadership positions (Iowa 4-H, 2013). 4-H alumni are willing and able to speak up during lectures and approach their professors with questions before and after class (Jessica, Derek, & Brittany). One 4-H alumni even mentioned sharing her opinion about diversity during an all-freshman event with thousands of other students present (Jennifer).

Theme 2: Guiding others

While describing effective leaders, many 4-H alumni mentioned the importance of guiding others as opposed to “being the one in charge” (Kelsey & Jessica). As one 4-H alumni stated, “It's much more about guiding and it's as much about listening as it is about talking” (Angela). Overall, there was a consensus (17 out of 20) that leadership should not be about your own thoughts, opinions, and beliefs, but rather about the needs and desires of the group. “Leadership isn't about yourself as much as it's about others. The more you get others involved, the more success you will all have” (Jessica), is a quote that aptly describes this concept. While multiple 4-H alumni mentioned “a balance between talking and listening,” many mentioned the skill of being the “middle ground (Alexander, Trevor, & Brittany)” during decision making processes. One 4-H alumni stated, “middle ground was a
specialty of [mine],” then as one indicated, “if I am leading a committee, it's more about taking the measures to make each voice heard” (Alexander). Some individuals described certain situations where they led groups to make decisions, meaning they also internalize guiding others as being an effective leader quality. For example, Trevor described a situation in which he helped friends make a decision about how to spend their Friday night and Ian facilitated a discussion regarding opinions about changes to a state-wide curriculum. Older 4-H alumni, such as Eric, help the staff he manages through an active process in which he engaged them to make progress toward a work goal. In their current roles, 4-H alumni guide others in ways consistent with how they described the actions of effective leaders. Thus, showing they internalize being effective leaders in their current roles and responsibilities.

In multiple situations described by 4-H alumni, they were able to listen and hear the opinions of others to help the group make a decision. Examples of this behavior include “creating safe spaces to share ideas” (Victoria), “including the ideas of others in decision making regarding club or school projects” (Benjamin, Jennifer, Jessica, & Angela), “accepting and communicating the ideas of others” (Nicole), and “asking the group clarifying questions to make sure each person is on the same page” (Benjamin). Though each of these ideas were communicated in differing terminology by participants, these ideals show the importance of creating a sense of safety and support in group settings and allowing individuals to feel valued in the setting in which they are discussing a topic. Other individuals included this idea of guiding others in their definition of leadership, as illustrated by Angela below.

“I'd say it's [leadership] much more about guiding, and it's as much about listening as it is about talking. And really, I think to be a good leader you need to also listen to
who you are trying to lead and not say that my way is the highway, you need to be open to new ideas and understand that somebody else might have a much better idea than you do. I think the best leaders incorporate all of those ideas.”

In some instances, this guiding took place in a work environment, but since the majority of 4-H alumni were college freshman, it was also found to take place in making decisions about social events. In the situations described by older 4-H alumni, they often were guiding the group to a “pre-determined decision” like a budget cut (Eric). In this instance, there was more guiding toward a pre-determined decision, but the voices of the individuals in the process were still heard and valued. The younger alumni facilitated group decision making like where “to eat or what movie to watch” (Trevor). In both of these experiences, each 4-H alumnus ensured everyone's opinion was heard in each of those situations. This illustrates that 4-H alumni are able to guide others to decisions with their leadership skills both formally and informally using facilitation strategies.

Even though this theme is specifically related to how 4-H alumni describe and internalize effective leadership, it is important to focus on how guiding others became a part of their practices. 4-H alumni described hands on experiences that developed their abilities to guide others, such as club experiences through which they learned by trial and error (Nicole, Brittany, Shelby, Ian, & Sarah). In multiple situations, 4-H alumni mentioned taking actions, such as staying late after practice to help others (Kaitlyn & Danielle), setting team goals to keep all members on the same page (Danielle), and providing feedback to keep the team progressing toward the end result (Alexander & Danielle).
Theme 3: Leading by example

“People always watch and learn from leaders. Not just when you are in the front, but in other places too. I always remember that” (Brittany). Leading by example was also a prevalent theme among study 4-H alumni. They believe people expect follow-through on projects and look for leadership from others, even if the individual does not have an official role (Austin). They indicated the importance of leading by example on campuses, in work environments, and even in their home communities. “If everyone thought being a leader was being the top kid [seniors], then there wouldn’t be any freshman leaders,” indicated second-year student, Brittany. Leading by example appeared to be the way the majority of the first year college 4-H alumni were able to lead on campus since many did not yet have formally defined leadership roles in the campus environment.

4-H alumni indicated multiple examples of internalizations related to leading by example. On campus, many freshman assisted other students in finding their classrooms or navigating dorms (Victoria, Derek, Ian, Jennifer, & Shelby). This included the idea of being able to talk in class and feel comfortable approaching professors outside of the classroom (Allison, Shelby, & Victoria). As Shelby stated,

“I know the campus pretty good because I have been here how many times because of 4-H and so I know where buildings are and so like the first week there were so many other freshman who were like I don’t know where this is. So I would show them or tell them where they are or I’d directed them you know in the right direction. So I kind of would take that leadership position.”

Within the social environments of college, 4-H alumni believed in avoiding parties (Allison, Trevor & Victoria) and taking care of trash in the dormitory (Allison) to set a
positive example for others. 4-H alumni indicated leading by example was a way to better their home communities and this behavior has been instilled in them due to parents and community members praising them for their service. In work settings, one 4-H alumni indicated “If I am not doing this the right way, then why should my team?” mentioned Eric. 4-H alumni also said “leading by example encourages others to learn from you” (Victoria), and emphasized the importance of “working with and not over others” (Derek). In the end, as one 4-H alumni said, “It all comes down to leading by example. I modeled my skills from others and there are others behind me that I have been a model for” (Ian).

**Theme 4: Oral and written communication**

4-H alumni’s responses regarding oral and written communication formed a theme about describing and internalizing effective leadership. This theme directly relates to a portion of research question three that seeks to understand how 4-H alumni use leadership skills and knowledge. One 4-H alumni stated, “You really can’t lead effectively if you can’t communicate effectively” (Ian). Other 4-H alumni indicated this same idea more precisely, saying “You have to be able to communicate” (Sarah) and “you should be able to communicate in a variety of ways” (Victoria) and then continued to share examples of how she always asks if her peers prefer email, texting, or calling as preferred methods of communication. Another 4-H alumni also posited “There isn’t one uniform way to communicate with others. [Leaders] need to know how to motivate others and get them to accomplish a task” (Alexander).

In short, 4-H alumni also internalize effective leadership involving oral and written communication. They make sure they are communicating both effectively and in the mode that works best for others. 4-H alumni believe they can speak in front of others and have
experience sending emails and writing agendas to internalize they are effective leaders in their current roles. For example, Jonathan described a club experience that is valuable to him now that he is no longer a 4-H member.

“...when I was the club president and then allow me to format it and put it into an agenda. And that was pretty simple, but sometimes you know it would have been a lot quicker for the club leader just to do that themselves but to involve me in that process, even though there was an extra step, it helped me build my skills. To just involve members in the process of building and organizing a team.”

Jonathan now feels comfortable preparing agendas and preparing for meeting settings. Other participants indicated situations in which they feel better able to communicate through email. As Allison indicated when describing how her communication skills learned through 4-H benefited her now, “...my professional emailing skills and those things are a bit better than my peers just because I had more practice doing it.”

Theme 5: Recognizing when to step up and step back

In order to be effective leaders, 4-H alumni described situations in which leaders need to recognize when to step up and when to step back to let others lead in both school and work situations. When asked directly how leadership is defined, Danielle described how leaders need to understand the circumstance in the following description,

“Being a leader is someone who, depending on the circumstance they change their leadership ways. So you are going to lead a group of five year old kids a little bit more strictly than you would a group of peers. You would be more like, you would join in with the peers while the kids you may have to tell them to do this. So
leadership is adjusting to the people that you are leading and the environment in which you are in and then to make it a successful mission.”

The multiple 4-H alumni (15 out of 20) emphasized the importance of knowing when to step up or step back through phrases like “understanding a situation before taking action (Angela)” and “being a part of them team while balancing leading things” (Brittany).

Brittany felt it is critical to give others the experience of being a leader, yet support them and be willing to assist others, in a way similar to what Jessica illustrated during her interview by stating,

“I think to be a really effective leader you need to experience all aspects of what you are going to be leading. Effective leaders that I know were never given instructions on what to do, they kind of figure it out on their own, so obviously you always have assistance and like for me I always know who I can go to help out and it's different people for different things but also to be, to help effective leaders I think you can also just give them support and say okay, you figure it out but if you ever have any questions that's when you can come to me and I will help” (Jessica).

One important perspective shared by five 4-H alumni was the concept of “using the strengths and skills of others” to be an effective leader and have an effective team. As Ian described in his definition of leadership,

“..to me leadership is all about knowing when you need to step up and when other--knowing when you need to step back as well, too. So to me, I feel that everyone has their own unique set of skills. Everybody is more capable at times of leadership than at other times. And I can see that with myself, too. There's times that I can really get a project off and going because that's what I am good at. I am good at getting people
organized, and making sure everybody is going in the right direction. Once that happens, there's other people that I am organizing that have better skills in an individual area than I do. And that's really where my definition has changed, in that it's not just the president that's doing all the leading.”

Ian understands the importance of letting others lead when their skill and ability is suited for that area. Austin also provided a similar definition of leadership, as quoted below,

“Leadership today for me is something where the major goal of what you are doing as a leader is to allow people to work and or develop to the best of their ability. That means that your job is to be the catalyst that gives them that environment for their growth. I used to say leadership was, you know, you tell people what to do. But that isn't it. By the time I hit high school, I defined leadership as being there, explaining things to kids, teaching them. It's more of a teaching role than a boss/employer role.”

These definitions provided by 4-H alumni describe leadership as being a team based effort in which they are willing to step-up and being in charge if needed, but they are also able to step-back and let others lead. 4-H alumni internalized this concept through filling the role of supporter (Austin), finding the balance of leading and following (Brittany), and utilizing the skills of other individuals (Ian, Alexander, & Nicole). This team based approach allowed for alumni to interact and learn from others. One 4-H alumni described how she is going to learn about crops when she started attending college:

“Challenges [at college] would be knowing a lot about the crops because I am a city kid and I may have corn fields surrounding my school in the middle of nowhere but I don't know a lot about them and so if we had farmers that I could connect with and
say I need help with crops--“Can you explain this to me?” They would be willing to help me because some of them are like second families to me” (Sarah).

This example showcases her willingness to ask for assistance in situations where others may have more knowledge. These illustrations show both 4-H alumni’s internalization and description of effective leadership in regards to knowing when to step up and step back.

Other individuals indicated having an understanding of when to switch gears when they are in committee situations based on the team members present. For example, as chair of multiple committees at Iowa State, Alexander describes his ability to switch gears to best work with individuals

“Each committee has an entirely different personality. We have an entertainment committee and the two girls on that are insane in the best way you can think of, which is fantastic because they are our entertainment committee and they are supposed to be that way. And I have to tailor what I say and my tone and my energy level to balance them out. Which is the opposite with our displays co-chairs. They are monotone and quiet. They are fantastic, but they are monotone and quiet and they don’t say much. I have to flip that switch and I have to be the energetic one I have to try and get them to say words.”

Overall, 4-H alumni rely on others to complete a task, but give themselves room to be involved if needed. This shows that they are able to appropriately interact in various settings and understand when to lead and when to let others lead. They understand the importance of team work and balance being in charge and letting others lead and accomplish tasks.
**Internalization**

There were two important concepts related to leadership that 4-H alumni did not describe as being descriptions of effective leaders, but arose as internalizations of effective leaders. Those internalizations are: (6) the need to encourage others and (7) seeking success.

**Theme 6: The need to encourage others**

“I encourage, encourage, encourage. You can never encourage enough. I try to get my friend to talk to a group of people and she thinks it is the most terrifying thing. I say, you have done this, this, and this. This isn't that much more. Look at the things you have accomplished” (Jennifer).

Many 4-H alumni indicated similar situations where encouraging others was important for the well-being of the individual and the team. Similarity, Jonathan shared that he “points out strengths in character and the quality of the person. I say, you are really bold and tried something new. I encourage in that way.” 4-H alumni Victoria included encouragement in her initial definition of leadership when she stated,

“Leadership is having a specific goal in mind and having the dedication and the motivation to work towards that goal, but you can't do it by yourself. You need to have the respect of your group and you need them to understand what you are doing and you need to encourage them throughout the process and you also need to give credit where credit is due because they are doing a lot of the work as well as you.”

4-H alumni described situations in which they felt they should encourage others to lead. Actions they took included demonstrating excitement for the other person’s idea, knowing when to encourage versus when to “shove,” and being supportive. In their own lives, eight 4-H alumni also indicated the importance of belonging in order to become an
effective leader. Along those same lines, being approachable is also something 4-H alumni do in order to make sure others feel comfortable in leadership positions. To do this, one 4-H alumni indicated they “never give blanket messages. I always tell them specifically what they are doing well” (Alexander). This idea was also illustrated by Kelsey, a university lecturer, when she discussed how she encourages her students. She gave detailed examples of things she does in her office, workspace, classroom and emails to make sure students know they can discuss things other than the assignments with her. One of those things is creating a classroom that is more of a team based learning environment that allows students to touch and interact with the textile materials. She uses this as a method to also interact with the students as opposed to lecturing the entire class period. She believes this has created a positive, encouraging environment for her students.

4-H alumni also indicated situations where they naturally apply their ability to encourage others. One 4-H alumni said “I hang up the goal sheet so that we all see it. It's really motivating for the team” (Allison). She described this as the process that created a positive atmosphere where the team had the same goal in mind. 4-H alumni also discussed being willing to fill in with supporting roles to let others experience leading, such as when 4-H alumni Ian described letting others lead when their skill and ability is better aligned with the task at hand.

Theme 7: Seeking success

4-H alumni internalized several things as important to fostering successful working environments. Older 4-H alumni valued creating a “positive, productive culture at work” (Derek). Within these work environments, supervisors take the steps necessary to ensure the other staff are successful in their positions and assist staff in achieving their goals. Overall,
many of these internalizations contributed to their success during their time as members.

One 4-H alumni shared the following illustration regarding her 4-H experience:

“I won the whole thing with the market hog and I remember my brother being so mad because he spent all the time and he did all the work and so that was a big thing for me because I realized it wasn't just like-- you couldn't just show up and do all that kind of stuff without someone [helping] from outside or you felt guilty not putting in your time. After that then I really took an interest in all my projects and--I don't know--it was a lot better of an experience because I actually felt deserving of it when I won after that” (Kelsey).

Later in the interview, Kelsey discussed how she thought it was important for people to feel successful in their roles, but also for them to feel like they deserve those successes. In both school and work, 4-H alumni seek accomplishment in the things they do. Many recognized “they won't always get the purple ribbon,” (Jessica) but it is important for the 4-H alumni as well as those they work alongside to attempt to do their personal best in each situation they are presented with in school and work environments. As Allison indicated, she now “pushes herself and others to be successful,” similar to how adults did for her when she was a 4-H member. Jessica also indicated that she “works hard and uses support of others to be successful,” in order to reach success on various tasks from school to club environments.

Two participants believe they add value to the work team, which increased their dedication to the success of their team projects (Derek & Austin).
Research Question 2: What particular leadership knowledge and skills Iowa 4-H alumni possess and attribute to their 4-H experience?

Nearly every idea that related to 4-H alumni' internalization of leadership skills was also described as a possession or attribute of the individual. There were four major themes 4-H alumni described as being attributes of their 4-H experience. These themes include: (1) generosity, (2) learned facilitation strategies through practice, (3) mastery through multiple, early experiences and (4) working with adults and peers to accomplish tasks.

Theme 1: Generosity

“Because of 4-H, I want to be involved. It just seemed really easy to stay involved” (Alexander). The majority of 4-H alumni (15 out of 20) shared similar feelings regarding their engagement in community events and leadership positions now that they are no longer 4-H members. Every single member is either currently engaged in service opportunities or exploring potential clubs if they are incoming freshman just starting school at the time of the study. Three freshman 4-H alumni were already running for leadership positions on campus. One 4-H alumni specifically attributed 4-H to making her a leader automatically on campus:

“I've had so many leadership roles I almost . . . do it automatically. Like for instance, I know the campus pretty good [sic] because I have been here how many times because of 4-H and so I know where buildings are and so like the first week there were so many other freshman who were like “I don't know where this is.” So I would show them or tell them where they are or I'd direct them, you know, in the right direction. So I kind of would take that leadership position” (Danielle).
Three participants also indicated continued service to 4-H through intended future involvement in Collegiate 4-H or returning home to provide workshops in their local 4-H programs or underserved counties, as Sarah indicated,

"I kind of what to be a 4-H leader but I kind of want to go out in the county and say, "I want to show you how I did my rigs in 4-H" in maybe a county where they don't send a lot of projects to the state fair because maybe their write-ups are just terrible. And I could hold a workshop saying, "here's how to do a write-up." A lot of these first year members are like, "How do I do a write-up?" So I would give them a copy of mine and say "Here you go!" This is what you do, make sure to include pictures because obviously the judge cannot be with you to do that project so take tons of pictures, include them in your write-up and this is what questions you need to answer.

I want to help kids learn the rope of 4-H."

These illustrations are similar to many alumni, with either intended participation in 4-H related service or other service opportunities. Given the time of the study, early fall semester, many 4-H alumni had not had time to become engaged in activities, yet they had the intention to be involved in campus activities and leadership roles, but every first year student intended to be involved in an organization, if they weren’t already involved. Among non-freshman 4-H alumni, many are engaged in service as leaders through serving on national boards, local community fora, and through leading Bible studies. Every single participant (20 out of 20) was involved in some club or service organization. Three 4-H alumni are also furthering development of the agricultural field through strategist positions (Derek), which they attributed to 4-H for exposing them to the field and increasing their knowledge at an early age. Another 4-H alumni said “I want to use Iowa crops to feed the
world with the supplement I created [during my time in 4-H]. Then I want to go to other countries and make it a sustainable practice” (Victoria). This same 4-H alumni later stated, “I didn't really understand what community service was, but I learned I can create my own citizenship projects and go out and better my community.” Through 4-H, individuals have learned the importance of contribution to communities through sustained projects.

Overall, the majority of 4-H alumni (18 out of 20) made statements regarding their ability to be engaged in leadership and service early in their 4-H careers, which has led to them wanting to serve their communities and stay busy in events outside of class because they are used to “being involved.” Outside of those statements being made directly, each and every 4-H alumni is engaged in more than their standard roles and responsibilities of simply attending school or working.

Theme 2: Learned facilitation strategies through practice

“All of these real world experiences from 4-H have given me confidence in being a leader on campus” (Jonathan). Similar to Jonathan, many other 4-H alumni demonstrated a connection between 4-H and their ability to facilitate groups. They credit experiences in their clubs, on county councils, and at national events that have provided them with opportunities to facilitate that have benefited their current roles and responsibilities as emerging adults. One particularly strong illustration was given by a 4-H alumni working with a diverse group,

“In the spring of 2013 I was a facilitator for National [4-H] Conference and that is in my life the single most important--I don't want to say “trial by fire” because I don't think it's that—but coming into that we had a bunch of informational meetings and webinars and it was all very vague. And it was a bunch of theory and this is the
theory behind running a group and when you get there you are more or so thrown to the wolves with creating a lesson plan. . .and having to actively engage 16 members. It's not just from your state--it's not even just from your hometown—it's from across North America and I found that very difficult. I had two delegates from Puerto Rico who spoke very poor English; I had a delegate from Canada who is mostly deaf and that was very challenging; and I had to go back again and again and again to my State [4-H] Council experiences, my [National 4-H] Congress experiences and my experiences on the Iowa 4-H Foundation board almost every 20 minutes to try and figure out a new way to engage my students” (Alexander).

This 4-H alumni had a strong sense of 4-H skills learned from state level experiences that benefited his facilitation. In general, 4-H alumni who participated at the club level attributed ideas of “understanding how to keep a team motivated” (Kaitlin), having responsibility” (Angela & Danielle), and “speaking about important topics” (Eric), directly to their experiences in 4-H within their club as they took on leadership positions and gave club level presentations. As many 4-H alumni indicated, there are situations in which they use their leadership skills directly related to 4-H communications. As one 4-H alumni stated, “without 4-H, I would have no idea how to stand up in front of the class [I lecture] and talk to them--actually engage them” (Angela). 4-H alumni attribute their leadership skills to 4-H club membership through illustrations similar to this one: “Each officer position gives you a different experience and opportunity. They all give you responsibility” (Nicole). Derek indicated a similar experience becoming president at an early age in the following explanation:
“It's hard for me to think of something specific [that gave him leadership skills], I'm not really sure I mean, I've always had some leadership qualities and I think that once I recognized that there really weren't any candidates stronger than me to be president, I took it upon myself and said you know what I am going to run and then I think I ran like a small campaign, as far as what my parents did, eh, I don't even know that my mom wanted me to be president that young to be honest, I mean she wasn't discouraging but she was like are you sure, that's not typical you know? I think they always knew that I had leadership qualities for some reason. I was good at rounding up the gang and taking charge and so really, I think it was just recognition and letting me do it. My mom didn’t stop me. It was just you know what, I don’t know if this is a good idea, but if you really want to do it, let's do it. It was good.”

His illustration showed that when adults are willing to invest time into individuals, even when they believe they are too young, the 4-H members have the ability to be leaders in their clubs that will enable them to grow into adult leaders. Derek later attributes his 4-H club leadership experience providing him opportunities to learn how to be genuine, outgoing, and have the social skills to carry out his role as a managing agricultural strategist today. A final illustration of learning facilitation strategies through 4-H comes from Alexander. Alexander has had the opportunity to facilitate multiple committees on campus as well as a few national events.

“It's hard [being a strong facilitator] and I don't know how to describe it, but it comes with a lot of practice. You can kind of, after giving so many presentations and running so many groups and facilitating so many things through 4-H there's this aroma in the room that you just know what to do. Especially when you asked
questions to your team members and your committee and depending on their responses and their tone you know if they are engaged or not. It takes half a second and at that point you can change or stay the same.”

Alexander illustration shows that he attributes his 4-H experience to providing him the undertones of his current facilitation ability. 4-H provided him with multiple opportunities to experience facilitating and now he is able to use those skills in college and extracurricular activities.

Theme 3: Mastery through multiple, early experiences

“So I started [presenting] right off the bat and it was great, as I think I was in 4th grade and I started doing that right off the bat. It got me used to being in front of people. I was very fortunate, I got to go to the [Iowa] State Fair a couple times with my presentations and getting used to that at an early age is so beneficial because it's almost like just jumping in the pool, right? The more you hesitate, the longer you wait, the harder it becomes. I'm actually an introvert by nature but I force myself to be extroverted. 4-H is a key component for me to be able to do that” (Derek).

The 4-H alumni quoted above is currently a public presenter and strategist for an agriculture company. His quote is indicative of the experiences of other 4-H alumni. Others attributed “learning communication skills through experience helped me develop a leadership style by talking during the meeting, and eventually running the meeting” (Alexander). These thoughts were consistent across all 4-H alumni, but 4-H alumni who noted on the demographic questionnaire that they took place in a state or national event reflected on those events during their interviews. One 4-H alumni who reflected on being chosen to attend National 4-H Congress shared,
“Before I went, I was a good club leader. I was good with maybe a dozen kids, and I was confident. When I went to Congress, I learned how to facilitate larger groups, and now I am comfortable doing that, too” (Jennifer).

Other 4-H alumni indicated similar experiences regarding their facilitation skills. For some individuals, “4-H got them comfortable talking to people” (Trevor). Others “learned how to control groups of people by engaging them” (Alexander).

Older 4-H alumni indicated situations in which 4-H provided the “foundation” for their leadership skills overall, whereas younger 4-H alumni shared specific situations in which they learned how to facilitate groups. As one of the 25-yearold 4-H alumni stated, “4-H challenged me to think about what it truly means to be a leader. What qualities make up a leader? How do I recognize individual differences and piece them together? How do I communicate? What is communication? 4-H built all of those elements that I use on an hourly basis now” (Eric).

The 4-H alumni above attributes 4-H with providing him the foundational skills and experiences to be an effective leader in his role today. Other 4-H alumni indicated this same attribute through comments such as “4-H provided me with a base for skills and working in diverse situations” (Alexander), and “I attribute 4-H [for] my ability to be able to talk and lead others effectively” (Shelby).

Theme 4: Working with adults and peers to accomplish tasks

The 4-H equation includes caring adults an essential element (see Figure 1, Cooperative Extension Service Iowa State University, 2013). While many 4-H alumni mentioned gaining project area knowledge, receiving encouragement, and learning how to work with different populations through their interactions with adults, multiple 4-H alumni (9
out of 20) mentioned learning how to be a leader in club settings from their peers in their club as opposed to adults. Learned skills from older officers include “talking and listening to keep the attention of others” (Nicole), another 4-H alumni indicated that nearly all of her knowledge and experience came from other peers. Kelsey indicated that the older members in her club assisted her with projects and volunteer events. 4-H alumni Jennifer shared the following experience from her first club meeting:

“My very first meeting was at our president’s house and I really admired him. He was a senior and he was just super awesome in the way that he could have fun and what not, but when it came down to business, he was business. And he really taught me that that’s really important, like you can have fun and you can be a fun person but when it’s business time, like you need to be serious and he was just really good at that and he was really good at relaying that to the rest of the kids too, so. That really influenced me a lot.”

Jennifer went on to connect how those experiences with youth leaders impacted her leadership skills as she grew through the program.

“He was really good at including everyone as well and like even though it was my first time, he had me lead the pledge of allegiance or something like that. And it was just the inclusion of everybody, like that was really, really important to me and I’ve continued to do that as I have progressed in the leadership roles.”

Jennifer indicated from experiencing a particular leadership style that incorporated everyone and made her feel welcome, she is not able to internalize that as a value in her own leadership practices.
Through those observations, 4-H alumni also learned the importance of “passing their knowledge down to other younger members as they grew older within the club (Brittany).” 4-H alumni who had out-of-club opportunities then gained experience working with other leaders at the county, state, or national level that provided them with more leadership skills. These illustrations include State 4-H Council, National 4-H Congress or National 4-H Conference. As 4-H alumni Eric indicated, State 4-H Council was an opportunity that provided him with a stronger application of his leadership skills outside of his county. As a delegate to National 4-H Congress, Jennifer shared her experience at National 4-H Congress,

“Before I went, I was a good club leader, I was really good with our small little group of maybe a dozen kids that at the most at a meeting, I could lead them and feel comfortable and confident and be guiding them pretty well. When I went to Congress, I gained the skills to be able to lead our group of 30 youth council kids. So, cause with a group that big you do ice breakers. That’s what you do to get everybody comfortable with each other and involved and make friends and what not. So it really took me up to that next level and then being able to speak in front of people, like it helped me out with that, too.”

In looking at 4-H alumni responses, the idea of learning from other 4-H members was more prevalent than the 4-H alumni learning from adults. As one 4-H alumni clearly stated, “Just watching the older kids in my club as leaders taught me what I wanted to do and what I didn’t want to do” (Victoria). There is a sense of learning from those directly ahead of them in the club, but leaders also supported members in learning leadership skills. Through interacting with many different youth and adults during their club experiences, 4-H alumni learned that “everyone has their own unique set of skills” (Ian). Though these caring adults
assisted youth in project area knowledge and creating supportive environments that promote belonging, leadership knowledge appeared to be learned through peer observation and interaction.

Overall, 4-H alumni felt comfortable working with adults, peers, and/or co-workers now due to their experiences working with others in 4-H. For some, these skills were directly related to work material: “4-H challenged me to think in business- and leadership-driven environments with others” (Eric). Other 4-H alumni indicated situations in which they learned how to communicate and lead various individuals that now benefit them in their current roles and responsibilities. Even through these interactions, 4-H alumni saw these situations benefiting them because others made them feel good about moving forward and they want to carry on that same mindset when it comes to working with others.

**Research Question 3. How do Iowa 4-H alumni use leadership knowledge and skills obtained through 4-H in their everyday lives?**

The 4-H alumni indicated a number of ways they use their leadership knowledge and skills obtained through 4-H in their daily lives. Overall, each 4-H alumni shared different ways in which they apply their skills in their lives, depending on their current roles and responsibilities. It is important to note in this section that since the study took place at the beginning of the school year, many freshmen were just coming to campus and were not able to be engaged in formal leadership roles. However, they did use their leadership knowledge and skills in different ways, as showcased below through (1) building teams, (2) meeting individuals where they are, (3) oral and written communication and (4) time management.
Theme 1: Building effective teams

The 4-H alumni who were currently working or involved in campus leadership positions indicated the importance of building effective teams when it comes to using their leadership knowledge and skills. In informal ways, 4-H alumni use multiple methods to ensure teams are working effectively. As one 4-H alumni reflected, “I had to show them the best way to mulch because no one else knew how, and I did [know]” (Trevor). Others mentioned ways that they created effective teams through “being excited about the project” (Kaitlin), “giving the team chunks toward a goal, I give them a piece of what they are working toward” (Alexander) and “planning productive meetings” (Eric). They use delegation strategies to support each of the team members. Additionally, four 4-H alumni mentioned the importance of “communicating in the way that works best for others,” (Nicole) “selecting individuals for roles based on their personalities” (Alexander), and “knowing their own skill and ability as well as the other team members” (Ian). Within work situations, 4-H alumni indicated situations where they use effective leadership skills to build teams as well. They discussed importance of leveraging the skills of others and “finding ways to make people work best together,” (Derek & Eric) as well as knowing and understanding their role and contribution to a larger whole (Austin & Angela).

Theme 2: Meeting individuals where they are

4-H alumni indicated multiple situations in which they used their leadership skills and knowledge to meet the needs of individuals throughout their current roles. One 4-H alumni provided an in-depth illustration of her strategy of meeting individual needs:

“I would say that there’s so many different types of people in 4-H with so many different work ethics and ways of communication; that’s what I took the most from 4-
H. I learned, maybe the hard way, that there's some people that might need more encouragement than others and, you know, more high-fives and attention and other people are fine if you just leave them alone and they will figure it out on their own. So maybe reading people is something I learned. It's a lot of body language stuff gives them away.... Some people react, like if they are playing poorly [referring to sports] to get more aggressive and like stomp around or do ridiculous things and then it's like, okay, you need to take a break” (Allison).

While this 4-H alumni indicated how she applies this knowledge broadly in her life, another 4-H alumni discussed more specific examples of how he interacts with individuals in order to meet their needs.

“"We have an entertainment committee and the two girls on that are insane in the best way you can think of, which is fantastic because they are our entertainment committee and they are supposed to be that way. And I have to tailor what I say and my tone and my energy level to balance them out. Which is the opposite with our display co-chairs. They are monotone and quiet. They are fantastic, but they are monotone and quiet and they don't say much. I have to flip that switch and I have to be the energetic one. I have to try and get them to say words”” (Alexander).

Overall, 4-H alumni indicated “it is important to know that everyone has their own unique skills and understand how to use the other individuals' skills to the max as well (Ian),” and “seeing where everyone is at and putting them all together” (Eric). They also discussed situations in which they meet the needs of others by “helping classmates who need things explained in a different way” (Jennifer).
Theme 3: Oral and written communication

The majority of 4-H alumni indicated use of their oral and written communication skills in current roles and responsibilities. These uses include “connecting the ideas of others,” (Ian) “crafting messages to respect others,” (Eric) “talking in front of others confidently,” (Eric, Trevor, & Jennifer) “receiving scholarships,” (Victoria & Allison) “writing papers,” (Victoria) “interviewing for jobs,” (Allison) and “preparing presentations,” (Derek, Victoria & Brittany) “actively engage others,” (Ian) and one 4-H alumni “gives weekly presentations for a national company” (Derek). All of these abilities to communicate both written and orally were gained from experiences ranging from county or state level interviews, record book, agenda preparation to club presentations (Angela, Kelsey, & Victoria). While many participants highlighted positive experiences giving presentations at the county or state level after advancing from the county (Derek & Eric), many participants also gained valuable communication skills from presenting at the club level as well. Angela, a 4-H alumni who only gave club-level presentations, indicated how the knowledge and skills she gained in 4-H benefit her now as a lecturer in the closing statement she made during her interview:

“If I hadn’t learned how to speak in public, if I hadn’t learned those leadership roles, I could not do this job, so for me, that came through 4-H, I know a lot other people get it in a variety of other types of activities but for me it came through 4-H.”

Theme 4: Time management

“When you are involved in 4-H and other extra-curricular activities you really need to be able to use your time wisely so you make sure that you are keeping up on your school work, keeping up on your 4-H projects, making sure you are taking care of
your animals that you are taking to the fair, and all those things are going to benefit me later in life. . .because those are all life skills that you are going to use. I mean, what job are you going to have that you aren’t going to have to communicate with people and use your time wisely?” (Ian)

This quote is not only an attribute, but also an instance of skill usage in his current role as an emerging adult. A majority of 4-H alumni (13 out of 20) indicated some use of time management skills they gained from 4-H in their lives today. 4-H alumni said “I make it to class and meetings on time.” (Brittany) “I wake up and I am prepared for the day.” (Trevor) “I enjoy being involved in things and I am more productive when I have multiple things to do,” (Nicole) and “In college, there are so many things to remember, I put them all on a planner, much like I did when I was in 4-H” (Victoria). As one 4-H alumni described her college experiences,

“...time management in my daily life now is key. No one makes you go to class, no one makes you eat, no one makes you sleep, but I’ve learned that to be the best person that I need to be, I need at least 7 hours of sleep. I need to eat 3 meals a day and I’m paying for class, so I need to do well in class because that’s going to help you in the future.” (Brittany).

Brittany later discussed the importance of having good study habits, which included chunks of time in the library dedicated to certain tasks. She has found a way to balance her work, school, board member and general life through this strategy and discovered healthy habits to be contributing to causes she is passionate about. Every individual maintains different strategies to effectively manage their time, but they all have used their time management
skills to adjust to their current roles and responsibilities that carry beyond the classroom or office environment.

**Summary of Findings**

In conclusion, when evaluating the findings as a whole, the findings of this research show evidence that 4-H programming has benefitted emerging adults as they take on new roles and responsibilities. Of those factors, the most prevalent were related to time management, written and oral communication, and understanding the individual needs of others. These findings suggest the importance of continuing 4-H programming in club settings to further develop youth across the state of Iowa. Since there is overlap in 4-H alumni use, attributes and internalizations, Figure 2 has been developed to assist in the understanding of the overlap of those themes.
CHAPTER FIVE: DISCUSSION

The aim of this phenomenological qualitative research inquiry, with a sample of 20 emerging adults aged 18 to 25, was to gain a better understanding of their leadership skills and knowledge. This study highlighted three research questions: (1) How do Iowa 4-H alumni describe and/or internalize effective leadership in their lives today?; (2) What particular leadership knowledge and skills Iowa 4-H alumni possess and attribute to their 4-H experience?; and (3) How do Iowa 4-H alumni use leadership knowledge and skills obtained through 4-H in their everyday lives?

The findings from these research questions were extensive; therefore, in this chapter, only the most prevalent themes are discussed. Following the discussion of the major findings and conclusions drawn from this study, the study's limitations, implications for 4-H staff, and areas for future research are addressed. Two major themes emerged from the first research question which related to describing and internalizing leadership knowledge and skills, including theme 2: guiding others and theme 5: recognizing when to step up and step back. Related to the second research question, two major themes arose regarding 4-H alumni’s possessions and attributes, those include, theme 3: mastery through multiple early experiences and theme 4: working with peers and adults to accomplish tasks. For the third research question, the most prevalent themes related to theme 1: building effective teams, theme 2: meeting individuals where they are, and theme 3: oral and written communication.

The findings from this study are consistent with earlier literature on 4-H alumni development of leadership skills (Cantrell et al., 1989; Seevers & Dormody, 1995); however, this research adds to both the qualitative knowledge of 4-H leadership development as well as showcases Iowa 4-H's development of “effective leadership outcomes in the 4-H equation”
(see Figure 1, Iowa State University Cooperative Service Extension, 2003). Specifically, this research adds to the research on 4-H alumni leadership experiences as no other 4-H study has applied the Kouzes and Posner (2002) model to understand the leadership skills of alumni. Through applying this model, it was discovered that Iowa 4-H alumni are effective leaders in their school, work, and community environments according to the Kouzes and Posner (2002) model created for business leadership. This study also adds to the research on Iowa 4-H programming, as Iowa 4-H intends to be viewed as a leading state in 4-H programming, yet there is little published research to support these claims. With Iowa 4-H enrolling 1 in 5 youth across the state in Iowa in research based programming, research needs to be published to illustrate what the program efforts offer for members.

**Interpretation of Results**

**Defining Leadership**

Youth leadership development research suggests youth and adults define leadership differently. While youth define leadership as a collaborative effort, adults tend to describe leadership in terms of boss interactions in which one person is in charge (van Linden & Fertman, 1998). In this study, the results present a balanced definition of leadership. While individuals discussed their abilities to step up and take on responsibilities, they also believed in the importance of working together as a team. This showcases that 4-H alumni possess both the ability to work as a team, and as individuals when applying their leadership skills and knowledge to everyday situations. This supports that 4-H alumni believe leadership is “the ability to influence and support others in a positive manner toward a common goal” (Leadership Opportunities, 2013), similar to the anticipated outcome supported by the 4-H program.
Describing and Internalizing

The first research question, which aligns with other studies (Anderson et al., 2010; Welch et al., 2013) related to how 4-H alumni describe and internalize leadership skills and knowledge. Primary findings within this question include (1) *guiding others* and (2) *recognizing when to step up and step back*. Internalizing involves the integration of attitudes, values, standards, and opinions of others into one's own identity or sense of self (Corsini, 1999). Each 4-H alumnus interviewed had a strong sense of self. They integrated the values and standards of the 4-H program into their daily lives, and credited 4-H for providing them with multiple skills to be successful. As Cantrell et al., (1989) showed quantitatively, skills and knowledge positively correlate with level of 4-H involvement. 4-H alumni who attended events such as State 4-H Council or National 4-H Congress provided more in-depth descriptions of leadership. These 4-H alumni also had an increased number of opportunities in which to practice their leadership skills, but it is important to note the positive youth development model being applied in the daily lives for these 4-H alumni in multiple situations.

The positive youth development model promotes meeting individuals where they are on the “continuum” of leadership abilities and provide ways for each member to improve on their individual baseline skills. In this study, this strategy was found to have benefitted emerging adults in many ways. Some 4-H alumni are currently able to lead groups of students across campus for events; others are able to comfortably talk to their professors and group members. While 4-H alumni reflected on their experiences during their time in 4-H and shared their current leadership experiences, it is apparent they were all in different places of development and application of leadership skills. In this particular study, some 4-H
alumni mentioned taking leadership roles in 8th grade, but regret being too busy to take on more roles when they were senior 4-H members.

Overall, each member gained leadership skills and knowledge relative to their abilities. This would be expected in the Positive Youth Development Theory (Learner et al., 2005), as each individual had their leadership abilities developed from the baseline they entered the program having. For example, in some of the experiences shared, the alumni assisted in preparing club meeting agendas, but in others the adult leaders needed to help them preside over the meeting. Some individuals were capable of presiding over a meeting as an eighth grader, whereas other individuals may have needed assistance when they were college seniors. The positive youth development model suggests that individuals need to be met where they are on the continuum of leadership development and advanced through experiences relative to their prior engagement. In this study, that model was appropriately applied to create “Competent” leaders, which is one of the 5 C’s of positive youth development.

Possess and Attribute

At the time of writing, the researcher could not find any specific studies regarding what 4-H alumni personally “possess and attribute” to their 4-H experience. However, the National 4-H website provides resources regarding the importance of building character on its website (www.4-H.org), meaning it is highly important to understand the skills and knowledge 4-H members attribute to 4-H as the National 4-H Council hopes to produce positive characters. The website clearly outlined multiple things club leaders could use to build character that are similar to things 4-H alumni did in their clubs. The website states the objective is to “help members develop such skills as decision-making, teamwork,
communication, tolerance, and conflict resolution” (www.4-H.org). This study had two primary findings related to possessions and attributes 4-H alumni held regarding their 4-H experience (1) mastery through multiple, early experiences, and (2) working with peers and adults to accomplish tasks.

Researchers van Linden and Fertman (1998) suggest the third and final stage of leadership development as being mastery, which all 4-H alumni in this study attribute to their 4-H experiences. Past work suggests project areas are the leading contributor to success in leadership (Radhakrishna & Sinasky, 2005), however the present study indicates experiences with opportunities to lead and facilitate groups for Iowa 4-H members is also critical to the development of leadership skills. Project areas were mentioned minimally in this study, but project areas are not a major emphasis of the Iowa 4-H program, unlike that of other states. Without in-depth knowledge regarding the differences in the programs and program priorities across the nation, this claim is hard to make as each state offers slightly different experiences for youth. For example, California 4-H places priority on subject area (http://4h.ucanr.edu), but the Iowa 4-H program focuses on leadership development as a primary outcome (see Figure 1, Iowa State University Cooperative Extension Service, 2013). This showcases that even though the national priority is on Health Living, Science, Engineering, and Technology, and Citizenship each state needs to perform individual evaluations regarding their specific states intended outcomes.

One finding of this study that is not present in other studies is the influence of working with peers and adults to accomplish tasks. The 4-H equation (see Figure 1, Cooperative Extension Service Iowa State University, 2013) indicates that “Caring Adults” are an essential element to the 4-H youth development outcome equation. However, in the
results section of this study, peers were more often indicated as a resource that 4-H alumni learned leadership skills from compared to caring adults. Caring adults were utilized in the areas of project knowledge, and establishing belonging, but peers were the means by which 4-H alumni observed skills they put or did not put into practice.

Use of skill

Multiple uses arose as 4-H alumni shared their experiences relayed to their experiences today. The primary uses shared were (1) building teams, (2) meeting individuals where they are, (3) oral and written communication, and (4) time management. In one study involving Nebraska 4-H alumni, presentation skills were 45.3% (Ranked 9) of the 4-H alumni’s primary skill from the Targeted Life Skills model, but the Nebraska 4-H alumni did not rank time management, team building or meeting individuals where they are as a primary influence from their 4-H involvement (Fox, Schroeder, & Lodl, 2003). Another new study conducted among Texas 4-H alumni by Merten, Locke, Williams, Carter and Lehman (2014) explored if 4-H alumni from Texas contribute to their communities and serve in leadership roles. This study indicated that 90% of Texas 4-H alumni responded that 4-H had motivated them to be involved in their community. Only 41 out of 425 participants (10%) indicated they volunteer in their community less than five hours per month, with the majority of alumni volunteering between six and ten hours in their community. The present study of Iowa 4-H alumni indicted that every Iowa 4-H alumni in this sample is engaged in their community, including school community, in some manner outside of work and education. In these environments Iowa 4-H alumni also indicated they use and apply their leadership skills and knowledge in those contexts and environments.
Kouzes and Posner (2002) suggest five practices of effective leadership, specifically in the context of the business world. 4-H alumni in this study used similar skills to the five practices suggested through the Kouzes and Posner (2002) model, though the language is not the same. Since the Kouzes and Posner (2002) study has never been applied to a 4-H sample, a Table 4 outlines how the Kouzes and Posner model translated into this study. 4-H alumni indicated they lead by example, which is regarded as by Kouzes and Posner (2002) as “model the way.” They also emphasized the importance of encouraging others, which is “encourage the heart.” 4-H alumni described situations in which they enabled others to act, which was described as “building effective teams” in this study. Finally, they shared how they work with adults and peers to accomplish a task, which is similar to Kouzes and Posner (2002) “inspire a shared vision.” In this particular sample, alumni indicated the importance of understanding the process before challenging it, and it may be that since the study was conducted early in the transitions of their new roles they did not have adequate time to “challenge processes,” which is the final effective leadership trait Kouzes and Posner (2002) state effective leaders need to internalize. Since the Kouzes and Posner (2002) business model of effective leadership has never been applied to a 4-H sample, this contribution to the literature showcases that 4-H alumni, who learned leadership informally through a positive youth development model are still indeed productive and effective leaders across other contexts.

Communication of experiences over time. While not specifically related to the study's research questions, it is important to note as study 4-H alumni reflected upon their 4-H membership experiences, differences arose related to the number of years they have been
alumni. Half of study 4-H alumni were 18 years-old, while 20% of 4-H alumni were 25 years-old, the maximum eligible age. Of the 4-H alumni who were 18 years-old, two of them discussed their experiences as being current, whereas older 4-H alumni had had ample time to reflect on all of their program experiences as a whole. Moreover, the 18-year-old 4-H alumni did not have ample time to engage in campus activities due to the early time of the study relative to their college careers. However, they all expressed the intent to become involved in a club or additional activity. Older 4-H alumni were actively engaged in work, school, or other community activities. Most importantly, many of the older 4-H alumni (20%) mentioned the ideal that “4-H provided the foundation for leadership skills,” whereas the younger alumni viewed their leadership skills as being more related to specific situations in which they have used leadership skills. Thus, future studies should explore other samples with an older variety of emerging adults to better understand the experiences of the older 4-H alumni.

Limitations

While the researcher designed a rigorous research study, there are a few caveats to note. First, the sample was limited to 20 past Iowa 4-H members, all found through a database of self-reported alumni. Qualitative researchers Bloomberg and Volpe (2012) state that individual interviews should allow for saturation in themes, yet the study is not generalizable across populations since the experience of individuals varies. Twenty interviews does not capture the experience of every individual who has participated in 4-H, especially considering the wide ranges of experiences 4-H has to offer. Second, ten of the twenty participants were 18 years-old and just ending their 4-H member experiences. The range of ages in this study was limited, meaning further exploration needs to be done to
understand the experience of 4-H alumni who are engaged in the workforce or have more college experiences. One recommendation would be to follow 4-H alumni a decade past their high school experiences to ascertain what types of leadership roles they acquire. Another limitation related to the sample of Iowa 4-H alumni would be that all participants were Caucasian. While this is reflective of Iowa 4-H programming currently, there are other ethnic groups not covered in this sample. As Iowa 4-H begins to attempt inclusion of other ethnic groups, this is an area to be developed. Additionally, since the alumni were identified using a database, it could be assumed that these individuals had a positive experience in the program and, therefore, provided contact information.

**Areas for Future Research**

The current data collected from this study consists of a sample size ranging from 18 to 25, with half of the participants being 18 years of age. A future study could be conducted with an older sample of emerging adults to see how they are applying their skills in the workforce, for example 4-H alumni who are 25 to 35 years. As mentioned in the limitations section, the beginnings of an emergent theme was apparent. Specifically, older emerging adults communicated their 4-H experiences as being a “foundational skill,” while the younger 4-H alumni shared how specific experiences related to their current roles and responsibilities. Through exploring the older emerging adult experiences, we could better explore how they use their leadership skills and knowledge in their work environments.

Additionally, the demographic questionnaire should be modified to include the office of historian and the participation event of county council if used with another Iowa 4-H sample, as five 4-H alumni indicated the office position of historian under the ‘other’ section
of the questionnaire. If this demographic questionnaire is used in other states, it should be modified to include the programming that specific state offers in order to be best utilized.

**Implications for 4-H staff**

The most salient implication for 4-H youth development staff at Iowa State University Extension and Outreach may be related to a change in the 4-H equation. As currently written, the 4-H equation includes Caring Adults as one of the essential elements in the 4-H equation. Based on the experiences shared in this study, 4-H peers had a large impact on 4-H alumni’s practice of leadership skills, and the adults provided assistance in project knowledge and creating a sense of belonging. Though both 4-H peers and adults were critical to the equation, there appear to be a large majority of 4-H alumni that learned from observing others when it comes to developing leadership skills and knowledge, as seen in research question 2, theme 4: working with peers and adults to accomplish tasks. By adding some ideal regarding peers, this may also provide more instances of observed leadership skill as the older members lead by example. This experience is consistent with that found in other states (Seevers & Dormody, 1995). However, it is most valuable when the youth are able to plan, develop, and implement projects (Peterson, et al. 2001), making the learning from peers more apparent if the adults were truly letting the 4-H members facilitate the meeting or activity.

**Conclusion**

In conclusion, this study shows similar contribution to previous research regarding 4-H alumni in other states, yet contributes to the field of research in many ways. First, there is now data to support Iowa 4-H leadership development and showcase the experiences Iowa 4-H alumni have regarding leadership and how they apply those skills and knowledge. Second,
the present study also shows the need to further investigate peer influence in the context of learning leadership skills and knowledge. Finally the findings from this study involved application of a business leadership model, Kouzes and Posner (2002), to the 4-H environment. The application of this model provided a true example that 4-H alumni are prepared for the real world with life skills when assessing the skills of leadership, a primary outcome of the Iowa 4-H program.

Closing Thoughts

The researcher truly enjoyed this journey of learning and the process of understanding the leadership experiences each of these 20 4-H alumni have had as a result of 4-H. It is through the sharing of their experiences that the researcher was able to create a better understanding of the skills and knowledge 4-H alumni in Iowa have regarding their leadership abilities. The implications from this study will be instrumental to the researcher as a program provider and supporter of 4-H programming.
REFERENCES


Figure 1: 4-H Equation

Empower youth to reach their full potential through youth-adult partnerships and research-based experiences.

- Our Reason: YOUTH NEEDS
  - Belonging
  - Mastery
  - Independence
  - Generosity

- Our Method: ESSENTIAL ELEMENTS
  - Caring Adults
  - Safe Environments
  - Inclusive Settings
  - Service
  - Self-Determination
  - Planning for the Future
  - Mastery
  - Opportunities for Engaged Learning

- Our Mission: PROGRAM PRIORITIES
  - Healthy Living
  - STEM
  - Citizenship and Leadership
  - Communication and the Arts

- Our Results: OUTCOMES
  - Productive Citizens
  - Effective Leaders
  - Outstanding Communicators
  - Successful Learners

- Through long-term, sustained learning experiences that connect youth with Iowa State University’s knowledge and research base.
Figure 2: Conceptual model of overlapping themes
Table 1: Detailed Demographics of Iowa 4-H alumni participants

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Pseudonym</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Gender</th>
<th>Years in 4-H</th>
<th>Leadership Positions Held</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ian</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P, VP, T, PH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sarah</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P, VP, T, PH, RL, H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Benjamin</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P, VP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Brittany</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P, VP, T, S, PH, RL, H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Derek</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P, VP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eric</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P, VP, T, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Allison</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P, VP</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nicole</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P, T, S, PH, RL, H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Alexander</td>
<td>20</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trevor</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P, T, S, PH, RL, Other</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kelsey</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P, VP, T</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jennifer</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>P, VP, S, PH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Danielle</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P, T, S, PH, RL</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jessica</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P, VP, S, PH, RL, H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Victoria</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P, VP, PH</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Angela</td>
<td>25</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P, VP, T, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Kaitlyn</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P, T, S, H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P, VP, T, S</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Shelby</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Female</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>P, VP, S, R</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Austin</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>Male</td>
<td>9</td>
<td>VP, S</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

P=President, VP= Vice President, S=Secretary, T=Treasurer, PH=Photographer, RL=Recreation Leader, H=Historian, R=Reporter, O=Other
Table 2: Demographics

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>%, Percentage</th>
<th>N, Number</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Gender Identified</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>40%</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>60%</td>
<td>12</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Age</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>18</td>
<td>50%</td>
<td>10</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>19</td>
<td>25%</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>20</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>25</td>
<td>20%</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Grades involved in 4-H</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4th-12th</td>
<td>95%</td>
<td>19</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5th-12th</td>
<td>5%</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Ethnicity</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White/Caucasian</td>
<td>100%</td>
<td>100%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Table 3: Demographics for Involvement (n = 20)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Mode</th>
<th>Type</th>
<th>Mean</th>
<th>Very involved</th>
<th>Somewhat involved</th>
<th>Little involved</th>
<th>Not involved with this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Afterschool Programs</td>
<td>4-H Afterschool</td>
<td>1.50</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>4 20%</td>
<td>2 10%</td>
<td>14 70%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Camps</td>
<td>4-H overnight camp</td>
<td>2.15</td>
<td>4 20%</td>
<td>5/20 25%</td>
<td>1 5%</td>
<td>10 50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-H Club (multi-project)</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>17 85%</td>
<td>1 5%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>2 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-H Club (single project)</td>
<td>1.60</td>
<td>3 15%</td>
<td>1 5%</td>
<td>1 5%</td>
<td>15 75%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other: County Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Other: Homeschool Club</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>State 4-H Council</td>
<td>2.05</td>
<td>7 35%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>13 65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Clubs</td>
<td>Other: Homeschool Club</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-H State Opportunity</td>
<td>3.65</td>
<td>15 75%</td>
<td>2 10%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>3 15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Special Interest</td>
<td>2.45</td>
<td>4 20%</td>
<td>5 40%</td>
<td>7 35%</td>
<td>4 20%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-H Workshop</td>
<td>3.20</td>
<td>11 55%</td>
<td>4 20%</td>
<td>3 15%</td>
<td>2 10%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>National 4-H opportunity</td>
<td>2.00</td>
<td>6 30%</td>
<td>1 5%</td>
<td>0 0%</td>
<td>13 65%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Events</td>
<td>Other: Youth Adult Council</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4-H school enrichment</td>
<td>1.85</td>
<td>2 10%</td>
<td>2 10%</td>
<td>7 35%</td>
<td>9 45%</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
**Table 4: Kouzes and Posner (2002) application model**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Model the way</td>
<td>Leading by example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Encourage the heart</td>
<td>Encouraging others</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Enable others to act</td>
<td>Building effective teams</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Inspire a shared vision</td>
<td>Work with adults and peers to accomplish tasks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Challenge a process</td>
<td>Understand situations and roles prior to</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>challenging process</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
APPENDIX A: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB) APPROVAL

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD (IRB)
Application for Approval of Research Involving Humans

Title of Project: Development of 4-H Youth Leadership Skills: A Retrospective Approach with Emerging Adults

Principal Investigator (Ph): Ashley N. Kinkade
Degrees: Master's of Human Development and Family Studies
University ID: 289752443 Phone: 641-780-4695 Email Address: kinkadea@iastate.edu
Correspondence Address: 4800 Morrill Road #214 Ames, IA 50014
Department: Human Development and Family Studies
College/Center/Institute: College of Human Sciences
Funding Source: [ ] Financial Support, [ ] Tuition Waiver
For Student Projects (Required when the principal investigator is a student):
Name of Major Professor/Supervising Faculty: Susan Madsen
University ID: 35764291 Phone: 515-294-2170 Email Address: smadsen@iastate.edu
Campus Address: 2356 Palmer Department: Human Development and Family Studies
Type of Project (check all that apply): [ ] Thesis/Dissertation [ ] Class Project [ ] Other (specify: )
Alternate Contact Person: Brenda Lohman
Email Address: blohman@iastate.edu
Correspondence Address: 2356 Palmer Phone: 294-6230

ASSURANCE
- I certify that the information provided in this application is complete and accurate and consistent with any proposal(s) submitted to external funding agencies. Misrepresentation of the research described in this or any other IRB application may constitute non-compliance with federal regulations and/or academic misconduct.
- I agree to provide proper surveillance of this project to ensure that the rights and welfare of the human subjects are protected. I will report any problems to the IRB. See Reporting Adverse Events and Unanticipated Problems for details.
- I agree that modifications to the approved project will not take place without prior review and approval by the IRB.
- I agree that the research will not take place without the receipt of permission from any cooperating institutions when applicable.
- I agree to obtain approval from other appropriate committees as needed for this project, such as the IACUC (if the research includes animals), the IBC (if the research involves biohazards), the Radiation Safety Committee (if the research involves x-rays or other radiation producing devices or procedures), etc., and to obtain background checks for staff when necessary.
- I understand that IRB approval of this project does not grant access to any facilities, materials, or data on which this research may depend. Such access must be granted by the unit with the relevant custodial authority.
- I agree that all activities will be performed in accordance with all applicable federal, state, local, and Iowa State University policies.

[Signatures and dates]

For IRB Use Only
Full Committee Review: [ ]
Review Date: [ ]
Approval Not Required: [ ]
Approval Date: [ ]
Not Research: [ ]
Exempt per 45 CFR 46.101(b): [ ]
No Human Subjects: [ ]
Not Approved: [ ]
IRB Reviewer's Signature: [ ]
Office for Responsible Research
Revised: 8/15/13
APPENDIX B: INFORMED CONSENT DOCUMENT

Title of Study: Development of 4-H Youth Leadership Skills: A Retrospective Approach with Emerging Adults

Investigators: Ashley N. Kinkade (researcher), Drs. Brenda Lohman & Susan Maude (major professors)

This document describes an Iowa State University research project. It has information to help you decide whether or not you wish to participate. Research studies include only people who choose to take part—your participation is completely voluntary. Please discuss questions you have about the study or about this document with the investigator before deciding to participate.

Introduction
The purpose of this study is to learn more about how Iowa 4-H alumni use leadership skills in their daily life.

Your study eligibility will be based on: 1) being between the ages of 18 and 25 years; 2) held an officer position in their 4-H club, and 3) been Iowa 4-H member for a minimum of five years. You should not participate in this study if you do not meet this criteria.

Description of Procedures
If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey about your participation as a 4-H member and answer questions on your leadership skills and experiences during a one-to-one interview with the researcher. Your participation will last for approximately 30-60 minutes. The researcher will record your interview and transcribe it later, but all of your personal information will be removed from the information collected.

Risks or Discomforts
While participating in this study, the investigators expect no known risks or discomforts for participants in this study.

Benefits
If you decide to participate in this study, there may be no direct benefit to you. It is hoped that the information gained from this study will benefit Iowa 4-H by providing feedback and guidance for 4-H programming. The larger Iowa community will also benefit as others will gain a better understanding of the 4-H program effects on young adults.

Costs and Compensation
You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will not be compensated participating in this study.

Participant Rights
Participating in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part in the study or to stop participating at any time, for any reason, without penalty or negative consequences. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.
If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office for Responsible Research, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

Confidentiality
Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy study records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: your interview will be transcribed within 48 hours of the interview taking place. After it has been transcribed, the researcher will remove all information that connects the words to you.

Questions
You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. For further information about the study, contact Ashley Kinkade (kinkade@iastate.edu), the graduate student researcher, or her major professors Drs. Susan Maude (smaude@iastate.edu) and/or Brenda Lohman (blohman@iastate.edu).

Consent and Authorization Provisions
Your signature indicates that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the document, and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered. You will receive a copy of the written informed consent prior to your participation in the study.

Participant’s Name (printed) _____________________________________________

___________________________________________  _____________________________
Participant’s Signature                      Date
APPENDIX C: INFORMED CONSENT FOR ONLINE 4-H ALUMNI

4-H Leadership Study

1. Informed Consent

Introduction
The purpose of this study is to learn more about how Iowa 4-H alumni use leadership skills in their daily lives.

Your study eligibility will be based on: 1) being between the ages of 18 and 25 years; 2) held an officer position in their 4-H club, and 3) been an Iowa 4-H member for a minimum of five years. You should not participate in this study if you do not meet these criteria.

Description of Procedures
If you agree to participate, you will be asked to complete a survey about your participation as a 4-H member and answer questions on your leadership skills and experiences during a one-to-one interview with the researcher. Your participation will last for approximately 30-60 minutes. The researcher will record your interview and transcribe it later, but all of your personal information will be removed from the information collected. If you are participating via Skype, you will complete this informed consent form by signing electronically at the bottom. You will then move directly into the demographic tool upon signing this document. When you participate in your interview via Skype, the researcher will only record the audio and transcribe in the same manner as the in-person interviews.

Risks or Discomforts
While participating in this study, the investigators expect no known risks or discomforts for participants in this study.

Benefits
If you decide to participate in this study, there may be no direct benefit to you. It is hoped that the information gained from this study will benefit Iowa 4-H by providing feedback and guidance for 4-H programming. The larger Iowa community will also benefit as others will gain a better understanding of the 4-H program’s effects on young adults.

Costs and Compensation
You will not have any costs from participating in this study. You will not be compensated for participating in this study.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/9WPG0JP
Participant Rights
Participating in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part in the study or to stop participating at any time, for any reason, without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office for Responsible Research, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

Confidentiality
Records identifying participants will be kept confidential to the extent permitted by applicable laws and regulations and will not be made publicly available. However, federal government regulatory agencies, auditing departments of Iowa State University, and the Institutional Review Board (a committee that reviews and approves human subject research studies) may inspect and/or copy study records for quality assurance and data analysis. These records may contain private information.

To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: your interview will be transcribed within one week of the interview taking place. After it has been transcribed, the researcher will remove all information that connects the words to you. All of the physical copies of paperwork will be stored in a locked file, and the electronic data will be stored in a locked computer file. When and if the research is published, your name, county, length of involvement and office position will not be mentioned in the writing.

Questions
You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. For further information about the study, contact Ashley Kinkade (kinkadea@iastate.edu), the graduate student researcher, or her major professors Drs. Susan Maude (smaude@iastate.edu) and/or Brenda Lohman (blohman@iastate.edu).

Please type your name into the box below.

2. PARTICIPANT Agreement:

By selecting the Yes button below, you have indicated that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the this page, and that your questions have been satisfactorily answered.
Participant Rights
Participating in this study is completely voluntary. You may choose not to take part in the study or to stop participating at any time, for any reason, without penalty or loss of benefits to which you are otherwise entitled. You can skip any questions that you do not wish to answer.

If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research-related injury, please contact the Institutional Review Board (IRB) Administrator, (515) 294-4566, IRB@iastate.edu, or Director, (515) 294-3115, Office for Responsible Research, Iowa State University, Ames, Iowa 50011.

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To ensure confidentiality to the extent permitted by law, the following measures will be taken: your interview will be transcribed within one week of the interview taking place. After it has been transcribed, the researcher will remove all information that connects the words to you. All of the physical copies of paperwork will be stored in a locked file, and the electronic data will be stored in a locked computer file. When and if the research is published, your name, county, length of involvement and office position will not be mentioned in the writing.

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You are encouraged to ask questions at any time during this study. For further information about the study, contact Ashley Kinkade (kinkadea@iastate.edu), the graduate student researcher, or her major professors Drs. Susan Maude (smaude@iastate.edu) and/or Brenda Lohman (blohman@iastate.edu).

Please type your name into the box below.

[Box for name input]

*2. PARTICIPANT Agreement:

By selecting the Yes button below, you have indicated that you voluntarily agree to participate in this study, that the study has been explained to you, that you have been given the time to read the this page, and that your questions have been satisfactorily
APPENDIX D: RECRUITMENT EMAIL

Email Script

Hello ___________,

I am Ashley Kinkade, a 4-H alum from Mahaska County and I'm looking for Iowa 4-H alumni to interview for my thesis focusing on leadership skills of Iowa 4-H alumni aged 18-25. I will set-up 30-60 minute interviews with individuals aged 18-25 who were 4-H members for a minimum of 5 years, and held a 4-H club officer position. This study explores how young adults use the leadership skills gained through 4-H. Please reply to [redacted]@iastate.edu or call [redacted] to participate or ask questions about this study.

Thank you,

Ashley Kinkade
## APPENDIX E: INTERVIEW TOOL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Areas to Explore</th>
<th>Key Questions</th>
<th>Probes</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>First experiences</td>
<td>Are you working or in school?</td>
<td>Can you explain how this happened?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Share with me what you are currently doing.</td>
<td>Tell me more about...</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What leadership roles do you play in (repeat back what they are doing)?</td>
<td>Can you explain what you meant by...? How did that happen?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tell me about some defining moments during your time in 4-H.</td>
<td>How did that make you feel?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>In the survey, you stated you held a club office. What did you do in that officer position?</td>
<td>What was involved?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tell me about key mentors that were important to you (Lerner, 2005)</td>
<td>How long were you in that position?</td>
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<td>Tell me about your 4-H club leader.</td>
<td>Were there any adults that were mentors?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Are there other instances where adult volunteers/staff helped make you a successful leader?</td>
<td>What did they do to help you be a successful leader?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge and skills</td>
<td>What leadership skills do you think you gained from 4-H?</td>
<td>Examples: how to conduct a meeting, how to lead by example, how to communicate ideas</td>
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<tr>
<td>Socialization/meaning</td>
<td>How would you have defined leadership when you were in 4-H?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>If you had to define leadership for someone, what would you say?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Explain how leadership is a part of your everyday life.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What knowledge and skills about leadership do you attribute to your 4-H experience?</td>
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<tr>
<td>Areas to Explore</td>
<td>Key Questions</td>
<td>Probes</td>
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<tr>
<td>Use of skills to meet standards of effective leadership (Northouse, 2013)</td>
<td>How do you apply the skills from 4-H in your daily life?</td>
<td>What was an outcome of that situation?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Share a time you expressed your opinion to others in your current role.</td>
<td>What was your vision of what should happen?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Did you encourage others to have this same vision?</td>
<td>How did you go about encouraging others?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>How do the skills you gained in 4-H relate to your performance in your current role?</td>
<td>How do you use others to help make choices?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Do you encourage others to be effective leaders? If so, how?</td>
<td>Was that a difficult experience for you?</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Tell me about a time you challenged a process in your current role.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>What actions do you take to help others be successful?</td>
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</table>

Close: Before we close, is there anything else you would like to share about your leadership or 4-H experiences?
APPENDIX F: FIELD NOTES

P1 8/15/14 inperson
Very well presented. Appears very professional—shook hand, thanks before responding. Strong understanding of self. Mentioned "I know you have to ask these demo. It's just that I wish I could just wake in America." Why can't we just all get along?" Interview was a little short—needed to ask more process questions.

P2 8/24/14 inperson
Still talks like she is a 4-H member. Many examples showcased that she is still leading as a "youth," but I see potential for that to change. Was talking through Demo. tool about what she has done. She still appears to be bothered by not having her opinion heard during the bully situation.

P3 8/23/14 inperson
Appears more on the "shy" side. Very fitting that he said 4-H made him more outgoing. Huge passion for Ag and the question about assisted tech seemed to break the ice. Participant struggled to elaborate on topics and I couldn't get much in-depth response out of him. Figured with hands and pen during interview.

P4 8/24/14 inperson
Story sense of "personality." Was wearing crop top and high-waisted shorts. Very strong sense of self. Knows she is a leader and has a strong personality.
had trouble finding interview location.

PS Skype
Lost connection two times during interview. Very charismatic and genuine - which I sensed, but he mentioned it in the interview. Participant used Skype app on phone so there was a lot of movement on screen. Was very excited to reflect back and share experiences. Friends and family were strong themes or ideas based on his interview responses.

PS Skype
Not sure I entirely understand his job, but he uses a lot of his leadership skills. He was very reflective of his 4-H experiences and recognized 4-H provided the fundamental knowledge. I had heard of this person before, but never met. Skype worked well, he shared a lot. Strong sense of self. Strong sense of leadership knowledge and the 4-H way. I believe he is a 4-H judge.

PS: Interpers 
Participant's examples all related to sports. Seems sports also had a large impact on her leadership skills, but still made many connections to 4-H.
P7 (continued)

things may have been contradictory. Example: says she is encouraging, shows example of screaming @ team. But she recognizes the problem of that reaction.

Talks very loud and fast. Interview was @ night. Focus was hard for both of us. Was very active. In heard she example she shook my head to show me. She also shook my head upon exiting.

P9 in person

Very well put together. Mentioned the demo tool, didn't like the labels.

Shook hand. Very professional. Strong leader. I once saw him give a presentation @ state fair, but he doesn't know me. Well-spoken and appears to have a lot of campus roles. Very open and honest. Was surprised he didn't have a positive club experience. Talked about activities were a huge impact on his development.

P10 Skype

He was interviewing from his dorm. At one point he stood up and I only saw his chest & head. Him talking for like 5 mins. Not sure what he was doing. Participant understands what he needs to develop. Skills. Very quiet. Does not speak as confidently. May be that leadership knowledge is high, but use is low? Seemed bothered so I didn't ask why he isn't the co-Robotics captain anymore.
D11 Skype

Shortest interview yet (~25 minutes)
Participant had 1 year old daughter, with her on camera, and was late to log-in.
Introduced me to daughter. Was playing with daughter through parts of interview. I think
she provided good insight, but was very
basic in her responses. Honest, but
I think it appears she only participated in club
and not too much.

Just re-looked @ survey monkey and that
would appear to be true.
Participant recognized she didn’t share much.

D12 in person

Very well, presented herself, hard thought
before responding. Quiet. Admitted to
not having a response for one of the
5 qualities. I am intrigued by her ideas
behind cat showing. I agree with her
and have just never expressed older
youth showing cats.

D13 in person

Very excited participant. Gives detailed
examples, and says “like” a lot. Only goes into
detail when asked. Seems to be adjusting to
college and has many of the skills thought
in be helpful for adjusting to college.
Being president was a surprise. Known to
her for both her county and club level.
Person
Person had a title. Friday room was a few minutes late. Very laid back and comfortable. Good understanding of need for needs of others. Communicates well, speaks with thought. Very involved in campus events.

Person
Wow! What a neat participant! As she said in the interview, by the time I walked back to my office, she had sent me the link to her blog post. Very cool blog! Participant actually moved the meeting two times before a time worked because of changes in classes. She said sorry for that so many times. Has many national, state, local roles with leadership and understands/implements delegating of tasks. Uses hands to illustrate examples. Came to interview with multiple bags—two laptop bags. Mentioned going to the library for work with distractions after interview.

Person
Glad the interview was over because the person's stomach was growling so loudly by the time we were done! She was going to the Food Science picnic I have seen this participant give really great presentations at the State Fair before! I don't think she knew me. Very well spoken and has done some really awesome things—creating a food supplement! Holy cow!
In person, Mr. Thompson mentioned how much she looked up to her siblings because they were so strong and comforting. She stood with her hands on her hips, head held up, and walked with a confidence that was inspiring. She asked me questions about the town, like if it was safe and what it was like to live there. I found her to be very kind and warm, despite her stern exterior. She was very interested in the story I was about to tell and listened intently. She seemed to have a curious mind and was always ready to learn something new. Overall, she was a very engaging and intriguing person to be around.
P: Was at home during interview. Big open windows behind kitchen table. P is headed to Stanford for school in a few weeks, how exciting! Very charismatic! Very outgoing. Participant was well dressed and put together even though she mentioned she was just home alone. Was genuine and had many leadership opportunities showcased. Was won leadership awards and was 2nd runner up in Fair queen contest.

P16. Person had trouble getting to interview location. McKay Hall across Keys on Thurs. who was not noticed, but I got in with an ATM staff and then propped the door open. Participant wanted to meet at Carver and walk over but he didn’t feel safe meeting me in the empty building. Once we met he recognized me from boy on stage (center), but only my face because I was introduced as state leader during conference. That was his first conference. He was comfortable after that. While I don’t like labels, he may have been on the autism spectrum slightly. He seemed bothered by items on the table behind me and mentioned a lot of things about making friends, being able to read people and having routines that made things easier for him. He seemed to enjoy his 4-W experience and kanded up to friends (though not at first) used 9:24 for fun and campus.
APPENDIX G: DEMOGRAPHICS QUESTIONNAIRE
Demographic questionnaire

Look at the list below and mark your level of involvement with each program. If you were not involved in a program, mark “I was not involved with this.” For programs you did participate in, please mark the box describing how much you were involved in the program.

**Section 1**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>4-H Program (with descriptions)</th>
<th>I was very involved with this</th>
<th>I was somewhat involved with this</th>
<th>I was a little involved with this</th>
<th>I was not involved with this</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A 4-H afterschool&lt;br&gt;<em>This is a group you meet with after school. You may have recreation activities along with educational activities. Not an official part of a 4-H club.</em></td>
<td>☐</td>
<td>☐</td>
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<td>B 4-H school enrichment&lt;br&gt;<em>A person may come into your classroom and provide an activity one or more times as a special program and your teacher may help lead the activity.</em></td>
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<td>C 4-H special interest program&lt;br&gt;<em>A short-term program focusing on a specific topic or activity. Open to all interested youth. Some examples might include 4-H bicycle safety, health &amp; first aid, or babysitting training.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>D 4-H club (multi-project)&lt;br&gt;<em>A club where you can choose a variety of different projects. The club meets several times a year.</em></td>
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<tr>
<td>E 4-H club (single project)&lt;br&gt;<em>You belong to a club where you take only one project. It meets several times a year. Some examples are livestock club, clothing club, or computer club.</em></td>
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<td></td>
<td>G 4-H workshop</td>
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<td>Your county or region offers 4-H sponsored programs or workshops. For example, an officer’s training workshop on how to fill out reports and officer responsibilities.</td>
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<td>H</td>
<td>State 4-H opportunity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>You travel away from home with other 4-H youth across the state. Examples include State 4-H Conference or Horse Jamboree.</td>
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<tr>
<td>I</td>
<td>4-H overnight camp</td>
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<td></td>
<td>You travel away from home and spend the night with other 4-H’ers and teens or parents who are your counselors.</td>
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<td>K</td>
<td>State 4-H Council</td>
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<td>A group of 40 members who work to plan and implement State 4-H conference.</td>
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<tr>
<td>L</td>
<td>National 4-H opportunity</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Examples: 4-H Congress, 4-H Conference, 4-H Round-up</td>
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<tr>
<td>J</td>
<td>Other 4-H activity/program</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Please describe:______________________</td>
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</table>

**Section 2**
This information will help describe the type of young adults who were interviewed in this study. Please fill in your answer or check the box for your response.

1. How old are you in years? (Circle one)
   18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25

2. Which gender do you most closely identify with? (Circle all that apply)
   - Male
   - Female
   - Transgender-female
   - Transgender-male
   - Prefer not to say

3. During which grades were you involved in 4-H? (Circle all that apply)
   4th 5th 6th 7th 8th 9th 10th 11th 12th

4. In which county or counties were you a 4-H member? _________________

5. Which of the following best describes you? (Check all that apply)
   - African American
   - Asian American/Pacific Islander
   - Caucasian/White
   - Native American
   - Hispanic or Latino
   - Other (please specify ___________)
   - Prefer not to answer

6. Which office(s) did you hold in your club (check any that apply)?
   - President
   - Vice-President
   - Treasurer
   - Secretary
   - Photographer
   - Recreation Leader
   - Other:_____________
APPENDIX H: CODING EXAMPLES

I: So Jeremy, what are you currently doing?

P: So currently I work for a company called Sogeti USA which is and IT management and consulting firm so I am a senior consultant there working on business transformation projects specifically focused on the financial services and insurance based. In addition to that, I also teach for two community colleges. Some entry level management courses so I do that kind of on the side as some additional fun work, I'll call it.

I: And what have you been doing since high school to get you where you are now?

P: I don't even remember. Good question.

I: I am assuming there was some college involved?

P: Yeah, so definitely my undergrad education, I would say getting my masters probably accelerated some of the growth that I've had into the consulting world instead of just a standard corporate role. I would say that helped. Both of those. I would say community involvement was important as well. So knowing a lot of my senior leadership team now, prior to joining the organization through community organizations that I am involved with you know, throughout Central Iowa.

I: Okay. And what other types of jobs did you have before this one?

P: Previous to this I was with Principal Financial Group doing a similar type of work to what I do now, so kind of business analyst skills, prior to that was with Principal in Human Resources and recruiting, prior to that and through a lot of my college education I was a sales manager for Yonkers department stores.

I: Interesting. Where did you do you undergrad and masters?

P: Yup. I did my undergrad at Iowa State and did my master's at William Penn. Just have started one class now into my MBA at the U of I.

I: In your current role with IT management do you or teaching, do you have any leadership roles in what you are doing?

P: I will take your question kind of two-fold so I lead many of the projects that we work on for our clients so I have many indirect reports, particular client project now I probably have 8-10 at a given point counting on-shore and off-shore resources that go into the current work stream that I'm working on. From a more structured responsibility, I have two individuals that directly report to me. That is, I do their performance review, monthly one-on-ones. All of that.

I: Any other leadership responsibilities in other life activities?

P: Yes, so I work with an organization here in Des Moines called Community Youth Concepts! I serve as their board president, so one of the key things. Some other roles throughout the community, you know, I take minor leadership on committee lead responsibilities and some of those types of things but not as truly formal. From a teaching perspective, I do sit on our course curriculum design for one of the
colleges that I serve, kind of in the business school, so I do do some of that work as well. Not a ton, but some.

I: What are some of those primary responsibilities?

P: Primary responsibilities for which one?

I: Any or all of them?

P: So, I think about you know my role with Sonseti and primary project responsibility, a lot of it is managing processes and stuff on a daily basis. I get all of the fun show up to work late, not in dress code all of that HR junk that frankly I hate. I also get managing budget and outcomes and results and client expectations. Timeline probably being the forefront of my focus most of the time.

I: Kind of taking a step back now that I’m filled in on what you are currently doing, uh. During your time in 4-H, what were some defining moments across your 4-H career.

P: Tough question. There were a lot. Uh, honestly, State council was definitely one so a lot of fun and involvement there. I will say working, you know this is maybe a little bit different and maybe taking it a little bit further but, you know working through my 4-H career. I graduated high school in May and started an internship with the Iowa 4-H Foundation in the same month, that I graduated actually, in May that summer. You know, that was a different interesting thing that you know, 4-H 100% helped me to get. You know, being fair king was another one that was a little more county level, but fun and odd and awkward all at the same time. Obviously CWF was a huge opportunity for me. I was on the phone a half an hour ago with one of the CWF program assistants that has done it for like five years, doesn’t do it anymore but I met him out when we were there, and we have kept in touch ever since. So, kind of cool situation there.

I: Were you a PA as well or,

P: I was not. No.

I: Ok. How did you go about getting that, an internship with the foundation after just being out of high school? Typically we picture internships being between after uh, freshman year. How did you land that?

P: Yeah, so it was an interesting gosh. Interesting. So that would have been right 4 months after Joe Leitz joined the organization as executive director. So Florine was still providing a fair amount of support at that time and I knew her pretty well, being from Webster County, a county that’s very active in Iowa 4-H. Her’s for 4-H campaign, I had a fair amount of exposure to those folks. I served on the finance committee for state council, so I was very exposed to Albert at that time, had made a decision prior to attending Iowa State to join a fraternity which at that time the house mom was actually the secretary of the foundation, Roberta, super great lady. So kind of all of those pieces aligned. And that’s how things kind of fell into place I’d say.

I: And how in terms of thinking about being prepared for an internship like that, how did that experience go?
P: You know, I thought it went really well, though I will be honest and say if it weren't for a lot of the 4-H things that I had done that really challenged me to think in more of that business and leadership driven environments I probably wouldn't have done very well. The state council is a great opportunity where I gained a lot of committee leadership, committee involvement, working for a common goal and a common purpose as well as always focusing on how do we market 4-H across the state. Those were things that were natural fits for the marketing internship I jumped into at the foundation.

I: I think you just mentioned, later on I have a question about like what leadership skills do you think you gained from 4-H can you tell me a little bit about those skills more broadly. I know that you just explained how they related you jumping into that internship, but how do you see them in what you do today?

P: It's kind of a indirect one, but I would say team building and team leadership is important. Definitely one that 4-H helped me to build. So specifically focusing on the team leadership side of how do I work with the folks that I have to build a team and kind of that direct and sometimes indirect leadership of building that team. I would say communication being extremely important. So communication skills as it defines a leader being something that 4-H helped with. I would say defining your own personal leadership style, as another thing that 4-H kind of indirectly puts on you, I would say that's a term that I have probably started to use over the past two to three years, so much past 4-H and if you would have asked me as a senior 4-Her I probably wouldn't have known what to tell you, I probably would have said it 5 different ways and here is how 4-H had shaped me. Now I would tell you that's definitely the style of leadership that I developed over that time and chosen to use.

I: Yeah, and that's actually, so, If you were to think about your time when you were in 4-H, how would you have defined being a leader?

P: Good question, I would say someone who is involved, who sees the greater good and the larger impact in a situation, someone who is a strong communicator, and you know at that point I probably would have said someone who everyone likes.

I: And what would you say now, a leader is?

P: Yeah, you know, I would say now it's someone who can build consensus, who can overcome tough obstacles or challenges who can be someone who folks naturally look to even though they don't have that, you know, formal definition of, oh you are a role model for me. I would say communication skills are still of high importance and lastly I would say someone who is a people person. Definitely that can mean 12 different things, but someone who is you know, willing and able and wants to work to truly lead.

I: Nice details! So looking at those skills that you just explained and I think earlier you mentioned this as well, but how do you use those things that you just defined earlier in terms of team building and communication in your current role?

P: You know, I would say it's something that I do daily, hourly. Definitely so leading meeting, leading team building activities. A lot of the work that I do is project driven so if I think about the overall project team that I support today, I would say we are 60 individuals. If I take that number to touch points across a single client or organization with a given project, I would say we are at 560
touchpoints. If I look at the next tier out how many touch points those have, you know, I would say we are influencing a broader population of 9,000 employees within any given sector or responsible for a single duty. Definitely being able to communicate a message, you know, my inner circle of 10 to 20 people who I know that’s going to ripple out over 10 layers after that I think is important. Definitely, you know how to craft a message, how do communicate tough issues and tough challenges but also the team-building part of how to respect other individuals, how to recognize the differences that folks bring to the table and how to rally for lack of better words, how to piece those individual differences together to make one finished product.

I: And out of those knowledge and skills that you associate with leadership, what pieces of those skills do you think 4-H helped you gain?

P: Good question. So I would some what say, all of them. And then I would take a step back a little and really think about the individual ones and I would say 4-H more than anything helped to build the foundation. To get your mind to truly start thinking in a sense of what is a leader? What qualities make up a leader? How can I become a leader? What does leadership mean? How do I communicate effectively? What is communication? How do I recognize individual differences and help to piece and play them together? From that point, in building those foundational elements you know, it’s been me, through college and collegiate 4-H you know, community involvement and employment you know, working to build those to the level that they are at today.

I: Perfect. So we jumped a head a little bit because our conversation was already headed there, but looking back to your experience as a 4-H member, tell me about key mentors that were important to you during that time.

P: It’s so funny, I came across a piece I wrote for gosh, some extension publication now, probably back in 2006 about caring adults and their impact or influence in a 4-Her’s life, which it’s funny because I was just reading that the other day so it’s funny you ask that question, I think it’s multiple tiered. I think if I look at the folks that I surrounded myself with or that surrounded me, to push me to new heights it was a combination of folks from a staff perspective, from a caring adult volunteer perspective that really took different stances and passions of mine and worked to develop those. Some were a little more career focused, some were how do we develop in a given project area, how do we develop as a member of state 4-H and 4-H in the state of Iowa, you know what does that mean and what are some of those activities you can be involved in. So it was those individuals, I’ll tell you, they just kind of came to me. I found them or they found me or who knows what. It just kind of, the cards aligned and they helped to push me to succeed in really those key areas.

I: And then, in your survey you indicated that you have held a club office, what did that experience look like for you?

P: Yeah, I was, that survey was hard and easy at the same time. It wasn’t bad but I will be honest I literally sat there and had to think and was like, then I got sidetracked in the details of gosh, how many times did I have that club office. Or what did I do? Or when was I the treasurer, who was the president? All of those fun things, but what it entailed was a good question. I served in president, vice president, treasurer, I think I was secretary once. Maybe photographer when I was in like 4th grade, a lot of things I would say, but I would say communication skills. Specifically, in a lot of the higher level roles it was definitely leadership and you know, a lot of that came working with caring adults, most of
which were parents at that time on projects that we were working on, on driving the results of a 35
person club and kind of in that space.

I: Were you parents also your club leader?

P: They were not.

I: So then, what types of things did your club leader do to help you fill those officer positions?

P: Do I remember, hum. I would say it was a lot of support and guidance and hey you should really
prepare an agenda for today. What things do you want to do? What activities might we want to do?
Let's work together to come up with that. Minutes were important. If I think of my role as treasurer, it
was completely different in a sense that it was a little more step by step guide of how we
manage a checkbook, here's why an organizational check requires two signatures, so a lot more
coaching and guidance there on a one on one basis of you know, who knows much about finances when
they are 15 years old. Sure you know a little, but you haven't balanced an organizational checkbook for
very long.

I: Right. Right. Moving back forward into your current role, kind of jumping around, how do you apply
the skills that 4-H gave you that foundation for, into your daily life?

P: Good question. The first thing that comes to mind is obviously a community mind-set, so really
understanding a greater need in the community as something I mentioned that you know, 4-H helped to
build that foundation. In terms of my daily life, you know, now it involves being involved with
several non-profit committees, serving as the board chair of an organization that's you know, working
with a lot elementary, middle and high school students on mentoring programs and service learning.
Similar to 4-H, but kind of the inner city take on some of that. You know, I think it's having that
mindset. Outside of that, I think 4-H kept me busy because, maybe, I don't feel as busy or feel just as
busy and I feel driven to stay as busy since I, you know, loved 4-H back in whatever that was, so I
think it's time management. Understanding time is important and there are tons of things I can do with
my time. So make the most of it. I think that's important. From a leadership perspective, you know,
leadership and goal setting, I'd say. Taking charge of my own life and being the leader of my the
future. Which directly leads to a goal setting perspective. So how do I set goals, you know, I go back to
I'm not setting goals in a 4-H way of necessarily writing out the action, the result and the timetable for
getting a particular goal done, though I have done that before but it's thinking about those things.
Saying hey I want to have my MBA by 2020. Okay, step back, how soon do I need to start doing that?
What are the things I need to put into place now to get there by 2020 so it's a lot that goal setting and
time table basics. Leadership in my own life.

I: Good. Good. Since this hasn't come up yet, what types of projects were you involved in during your
4-H career?

P: You know, I actually did a ton of photography. I showed some rabbits back in the day, we will leave
the rabbit conversation out. That was not my biggest most prouddest most enjoyable moment, lots of
communication, from extern to ed presentations to working exhibits, kind of all the love there. Uh,
what else did I do? Some visual arts, some self-determined, some leadership some citizenship. Clothing
selection back in the day, that's all that comes to mind.
I: So, the last section of the interview kind of moves into some specific examples of things that you may or may not have done rather recently, and so yeah, umm, in your current role or in your current other types of roles, not necessarily in work, but has there ever been a time where you have expressed your opinion when you weren't necessarily in the majority and what did that look like?

P: You know, I wish I could answer that question with no. You know, on the client projects that I support now as a consultant are, we are paid, truthfully by a high level or somewhat high level executives to come into projects that aren't necessarily popular. They are not easy and the conversations are not fun. So often times there are decisions that we make, you know, we have to communicate to the client that you know, we have done 600 hours of research on something and this is what we truly feel to be the best, this is the direction that we suggest going and that frankly it is never, or in my couple years there, has never been a popular decision per se. So you know, being able to communicate that to broad audiences.

I: And do you end up encouraging other people to see it the same way as you, or do you just kind of let it stay?

P: Yes and no. A lot of it is results driven, I say here are the tangible 5 outcomes that we are going to get from doing X, Y, Z here's what we will see in 3 years, 5 years, 7 years, 10 years. If I think and take a step back out of that example, to some of the non-profit that I do as a board president, it's very much a different conversation, right? It's not me ever saying anything ever like a dictation of here's what we should do. It's building consensus, having lengthy two hour discussions about the strategic direction that we are going to go with the given project to have everyone brought into the decision. So sure I will slowly guide the conversation in the direction that will take us to the end result that we know we maybe need to get to, will help to build that consensus by asking questions and kind of directing the flow of conversation slightly but not coming out and saying we are no longer going to participate in this state grant program in this program because A B and C. No, let's all realize together why this program is not successful for the students that we serve, not fiscally responsible of the organization.

I: So how do you go about encouraging other people to reach that decision?

P: You know, I think discussion is a key point, so knowing that the discussion will be heated often times, but letting folks vent and share their opinion. I think that's a really good way. Definitely doing some prep work to have in individuals at the table that are value add and if I have come to a conclusion based on a lot of analytic or research or conversations already and I kind of know the direction, I need to be sure that I have these three individuals sitting at the table because I know they are 100% going to support the direction that our executive director feels we need to go in. It's kind of some of that. You know I would say it would be allowing individuals the chance to hear all sides and see all information. So if you have data and analytic and personal evaluations from parents or students, bring those to the table. I absolutely want to see them and you know sometimes it's swaying the decision that I already made in a different direction or, oh yeah, we will try it for another year, under these parameters of scaling this back or scaling this up. So I think it's definitely you know, conversation. Crucial conversations allowing all folks to talk and share their opinion as well as kind of the, it's kind of my personal or professional career coming in, but a lot of it is data and analytics driven. If you have data to back up a decision I can't always say no to the data. I can try to drive it off my whim, but I think we all know that longer term that's probably not the best avenue.
I: So looking at a different aspect of sharing your opinion, have you ever recognized that a process isn't going as smoothly as it could and that's caused you to challenge how something works and what did that look like?

P: Gosh, these are tough questions. That I literally do on a daily basis. Trying to think of a specific example that might be insightful. So you know, I think with some of our financial services with our insurance clients, there are many processes that don't work. Don't work successfully. Should have never happened and are happening. In terms of you know what I really look at and think about and work toward, you know, it's understanding what's happening and the intricacy that is in the process to make recommendations for kind of how to shift in a different direction.

I: And what, looking about because you have a managerial role over other people, what actions do you take to help make sure that they are being successful?

P: I think it's a couple things. You know, I would say being open and honest with them. Being a sounding board to anything that they want to say at any point so being able to put on couple different hats. It's putting on a friend hat, putting on a true manager hat, it's putting on a career driver hat. It's really balancing the three of those over time. And I would say it's understanding what has brought them to the table. What has brought them to the table. Why are you here? Why this career opportunity? What this Job? Why this company? Why this industry? And two years from now, five years from now, where do you want to be? And if this isn't where you want to be I can understand that. In such a somewhat tough economy, I can understand that people are where they are and that's sometimes what we have to live with and you know help me build results and we will hopefully get you to where you want to go, but being able to help drive their career goals you know, secondly, but first understanding where they have been and where they are heading and kind of that full personal journey.

I: And do you find it difficult to wear those different hats, like do they recognize when they are changing those hats, what?

P: I sometimes make the reference ok, I am going to put my friend hat on now and throw out the fact that I'm your boss and tell you here's what you should do. Or, you should go in a different direction with a given thing. You know, it's hard to wear multiple hats. And I would say it's harder in my role because, you know, I am spending a full-time person time on a project but I am also leading a team on the side and trying to balance those, too. But I think with any of those three hats, conversations that come along way. I try to clarify as much as I can the stance I am taking. On a given situation as your manager this is what I would tell you. As your friend, I would tell you to do this differently. So, being open to those few points, but yeah. It's not easy to switch between the three. And maybe it's a friendly, Iowa nice culture thing, but you know, it's definitely I would like to be a friend more than not in any of those three situations. Specifically when push comes to shove and those conversations happen, you know, maybe I put on a little more of a stern this isn't what I want to tell you hat, but this is the conversation we need to have and this is where we are at in your career right now.

I: How did you come about adopting that style?
P: Good question. I’ll say it was kind of a Joe thing. I don’t know how well you do or don’t know Joe, but Joe always put on multiple hats and as your friend here’s what I will tell you, as your boss, here is why we are going to do it a different way. Yeah.

I: You just picked that up from him. Very cool.

P: Yeah. I would say it was from him, and others kind of take that stance. But I think, being in the midwest and being friends, I don’t mean super good friends, but having that friendly take and attitude is extremely important.

I: Well, I think that is all. But is there anything that you would like me to know about either your 4-H or your leadership and job experiences before I close?

P: I don’t think, so I think that’s really it. I am looking forward to hearing more about how everything is going with this.
Appendix I: THEMES DOCUMENT

Themes

Research Question 1:
How do Iowa 4-H alumni describe and/or internalize effective leadership in their lives today?

Describe and Internalize:

1. Confidence
2. Guide others
3. Lead by example
4. Oral and written communication
5. Recognize when to step-up and step back

Internalize Only:

Encourage others
Seek Success

Research Question 2:
What particular leadership knowledge and skills Iowa 4-H alumni possess and attribute to their 4-H experience?

Attribute:

Generosity
Learned facilitation strategies through practice
Mastery through multiple, early experiences
Working with adults and peers to accomplish tasks

Research Question 3:
How do Iowa 4-H alumni use leadership knowledge and skills obtained through 4-H in their everyday lives?

4 themes

Building effective teams
Meeting individuals where they are
Oral and written communication
Time management

Additional Findings
Communication of experiences over time

- Older alumni attribute a broader summary of 4-H providing the “foundation”
- Two of the 18 year old alumni still mention 4-H as being a current member
### APPENDIX J: HAND-CODED CHART

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| Success in job setting 6 | - State council and skill development 6 |
| Leadership knowledge | - All leadership knowledge 10  
- How to apply leadership skills 7  
- Being a leader is situational 7 |
| Taught Social skills 5 | - Interacting at club and fair 5 |
| Program emphasized goals and communications 7 | - No other thing could prepare me like 4-H 7 |
| Has value to offer work 5 6 | - Feels valued 5 6 |
| Project Area knowledge | - Working with caring adults 5 11 6 13 18 16 |
| Expanding leadership qualities 5 | - Future involvement as leader 4 |
| Community | - Fair and friends 5 |
| Multiple, early experiences 19 6 14 | - Comfort with facilitating 8 9 1  
- Early Professional speaking opportunities 1  
- 5th grade office 14 |
| More rounded person, more confident 13 19 | - Able to be successful 13  
- Success in life 19 |
| Ability to work on teams 7 | - Keep team together 7 |
| Learn by doing 5 | - Presentations |
| Nothing else could have prepared me like 4-H 9 8  
Use daily 14 | - 4-H provided a foundation for future roles 1 6 |
| Thinking about what is a leader? What does it mean? 6 | - |
| Being genuine | - Positive work environment 5  
- What you do is more valuable than money 12 |
| Internalization | Confidence | - Being a good leader 4  
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<td>• Be active</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>unless you do something</td>
<td>• Involvement in activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>11</td>
<td>7</td>
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<tr>
<td>Intended to be a leader</td>
<td>• Involvement in activities</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>on campus</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
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<td>5</td>
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</table>

Real world experience → confidence in meeting people and accepting challenges

"I wasn't necessarily signed up for it because I saw a huge opportunity for me to be a leader. It was just ones of those things that I did because the projects interested me... I don't think my parents even wanted me to be president in 7th grade, but somebody thought I had potential." - 5
Club participation only -> skills related to being more outgoing, working with adults

State level activities -> more leadership knowledge and stronger communication skills in interviews

Difference from being member to being leader 10

Understanding greater need in the community -> foundation in 4-H 6 (where to fit)

Link these ideas to (Cantrell, 1989)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Environment</th>
<th>Behavior Change</th>
<th>Long-term Impact</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>General</td>
<td>Leadership roles 4</td>
<td>• Want to be surrounded by leaders 4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Help others fill roles 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Goal setting 11</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Ability to set and meet many goals 11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding of self 8 9 5 4 11 10 7 14 15 19</td>
<td>• Knows strengths and areas for improvement 8 9 5</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Understands skills 7</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Leadership types 11 7</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Attn. to detail</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Confidence in work 5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Push to win and grow 11</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Strive for success now 11</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Involvement in State 4-H activities (9)</th>
<th>Get involved, sign up for activities (9)</th>
<th>Involvement in community 9</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communications Events at all levels</td>
<td>Public Speaking Skills 8 9 1 5 7 19</td>
<td>• Can prepare on the fly and engage audiences 9</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Small and large group speaking skills 8 1 12</td>
<td>• Participate in group teams 1</td>
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<td></td>
<td>Knowledge of format 5</td>
<td>• Able to step up 12</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Exttemp -&gt; build off of previous presenter 15*</td>
<td>• Comfort in course presentations 1 19</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Trained as prof. presenter for work 5</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>• Gives presentations weekly 5 19</td>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Interviews and scholarships 15</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Had foundation skills 5 16</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Comfort in crowds 5</td>
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</tbody>
</table>
| State 4-H Council | Learned how to lead groups and change gears for groups 9  
Provided success in job setting 6  
State Fair 15 | • Leads groups on campus 9  
• Diverse environments 15  
• Adjusts to needs of others/situations 9 13  
• Knew icebreakers and strategies during meeting 9 |
|------------------|-------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------|
| National 4-H Conference Congress | Learn by doing, facilitation 9  
Lead other groups settings 12 | • Interest in working with diversity 9  
• Leading other settings 12 |
| Community engagement | 4-H community service “kept busy” 6 | • Continues to serve 6 |
| Adult Interaction | • Trust, responsibility  
• Guidance  
• Feedback on paperwork 1  
• Respect ideas 2  
• Scaffold 2  
• Pushed to succeed 7 | • Sustained relationship 9  
• Transfer of skill 8  
• Pay it forward with feedback 1  
• Hope to be judge 2  
• Able to communicate with adults 2 13 |
| Interviews for projects and awards | • Multiple experiences 7  
6 13  
• Handshakes 7  
• Building on skills 7 19 | • Comfort in job  
• Knowledge 7  
• Felt need to continue 7  
• Confidence in interviews 13  
• Reflect 18 |
| Club Officer Team | • Responsibility  
• Specific knowledge: reports and checks 8  
• Create fun environment 5  
• Grew and took responsibility 13 16  
• Learning by observing older youth 8 11 12 15 19  
• Introduction to leading meetings 1 5  
• Intro. To being outgoing 2  
• Communication skills 6 | • Importance of being on time 8  
• Future leader of clubs and orgs. 1  
• Value fun work environment 5  
• Hope to engage in more clubs 2  
• Has ownership 19 16  
• Following through 15  
• Fun/serious environment 15  
• Able to introduce self in college, have common conversation 2  
• Knowing when to step back 14 15 20 |
<table>
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<tr>
<th>Career exploring</th>
<th>Working with adults and youth 6</th>
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<td>10 13 12 14 16</td>
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<td>Problem Solving in settings</td>
<td>Interest in solving problems 1</td>
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<td>Service Opportunities</td>
<td>Contribution to community 8</td>
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<td>Iowa 4-H Camp</td>
<td>Encouraged future involvement 1</td>
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<td>Created relationships at ISU 1</td>
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<td>Branched out with new things 20</td>
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<td>Lead kids in activities 2</td>
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<td>Looking at Ele. Education career 2</td>
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<tr>
<td>Club</td>
<td>Provided opportunity to make friends 5 6</td>
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<td>Belonging 8 4 5 1 3 13 20</td>
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<td>Leadership roles 13</td>
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<td>Showing livestock</td>
<td>Guilt from not working hard enough 11</td>
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<td>Hard work 12 14</td>
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<td>Definitions of Leadership</td>
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APPENDIX L: LEADERSHIP DEFINITIONS

P1: I feel like I am like them now, but I also feel like my definition of leadership has changed as I have gone through 4-H. I mean I can still be like them and I can still want people to follow me, but to me leadership is all about knowing when you need to step up and when other--knowing when you need to step back as well, too. So to me, I feel that everyone has their own unique set of skills. Everybody is more capable at times of leadership than at other times. And I can see that with myself, too. There's times that I can really get a project off and going because that's what I am good at. I am good at getting people organized, and making sure everybody is going in the right direction. Once that happens, there's other people that I am organizing that have better skills in an individual area than I do. And that's really where my definition has changed, in that it's not just the president that's doing all the leading. It might be the president that is organizing all the people and then from there other people are leading. I think that is an important value to know that everyone has their own unique leadership skills that are being utilized to their maximum as well.

P2: To me leadership, was, when I was beginning 4-H, I knew I wanted to become a leader, but I didn't know how to become a leader when I first started because I was like the shy timid one. Not wanting to talk a whole lot, they would try and get me to but I was like, I am just fine let me sit here. Now I am not afraid to step up and say I can take this project, I know this expertise, I can do this.

I: And so, I guess you went into how you define it today, but can you elaborate a little bit on how you. . .

P: Today I would say that to be a great leader you need to step out of your comfort zone and which I have in many opportunities. I led a fairground restore project and we restored our grandstands and I was the main one. I itemized, we got a list of supplies we needed and said why we need this and then I got the whole group together and if some members weren't able to participate I said can you please donate bars or something? So I was able to step out of my comfort zone, lead a grounds improvement project that was led by two other girls in our county and say, "I can help. Let me lead this for my club." And you don't want to be in that shell the whole time you want to step out of your comfort zone because because people aren't going to know you if you don't step out of that shell.

P3: I always thought that leadership would mean taking a responding role and always taking others ideas and sticking with those, but as time went on I found out that it was, that you have to be more outgoing and you don't always have to stick with one certain goal and go towards that. You can always, like manipulate, move it around to have other people's view shared in there instead of having one particular goal.

P4: but going through the years it's not just that. You don't have to be president or even vice president or any position to be a good leader. Such as right now, I am a freshman and if I still would have thought that leaders are the top kids, I would think that I would not be a leader anymore and the seniors are. It's not the case. Everybody no matter what their age can be a good leader and it's something that if all of the parts they have learned, like communications and work-ethics and good values in life. They put that together and show that out to all of their activities and what they do that makes them a good leader.
P5: Well, it would still probably go to, I view a great leader as someone that I would not want to disappoint, not because of like punishment for me, just because I have so much respect for them. Someone that I truly, truly admire what they are doing and I want to do the best that I possibly can because I don't want to let them down. That's a great leader.

P6: Yeah, you know, I would say now it's someone who can build consensus, who can overcome tough obstacles or challenges who can be someone who folks naturally look up to even though they don't have that, you know, formal definition of, oh you are a role model for me. I would say communication skills are still of high importance and lastly I would say someone who is a people person. Definitely that can mean 12 different things, but someone who is you know, willing and able and wants to work to truly lead.

P7: I would say being a leader is not necessarily the person who has the most control, but the person, I think all leaders are respected, but I think to be a leader also can be a lonely position because it's hard to be friends with people and at the same time if the friends are doing something wrong you have to be the one to tell them that they are doing it wrong so I think you have to be not afraid to be alone and to be independent. I guess that is what has changed now because I think in the past, especially like middle school, I thought like everyone would like the leader the popular person and everyone would want to be their friends, but as I've gotten older that's not necessarily true.

P8: Now I think it's a lot more, not necessarily the people who stand up and talk in front of you but the people who are willing to step up and get things done and who aren't afraid to delegate and make sure they have a plan, but I feel like it's people who are able to speak in front of people and not even in front of them, but just speak and make sure things get done the most efficiently they can.

P9: That's hard, that's a couple of hours worth the definitions, however, being able to lead a person or a group of people in the direction that they see fit, not and it changes with your position and roles so like homecoming they are going to go the way we need it to go if they like it or not but I suppose if you are given more leeway, being able to point people in the right direction, effectively.

P10: Leadership is sort of the, basically being able to do, to get to draw a crowd, or get your people to follow you I guess to help you or with different tasks, that's pretty much what leadership would be.

P11: Obviously there is a whole depth to leadership that you could never understand like there are so many different types, too. Girls that were like the silent leader type that you know, they show by example and they kind of do that, and obviously like the vocal leaders and ones that were actually telling you what to do and stuff. I don't know, there are ones you always looked up to and you would never have thought that because they were always so quiet, but they were meticulous in what they did and they showed you how to work hard and so yeah, I think it's a whole different thing, there's so many different types of leaders now and it's not just whoever's in charge is the leader. you know.

P12: I would say a leader is somebody who helps you make yourself the best you can be. Really, they are more of a guide than a boss, they try and guide you to improve yourself, to make yourself better to reach your goals rather than do this, do that, do this.
P13: Being a leader today is someone who leads people but like, how do I word this. Depending on the circumstance they change their leadership ways. So you are going to lead a group of five year old kids a little bit more like strictly than you would a group of peers. You'd be more like, you would join in with the peers while the kids you would have to tell them do this, this, this you know. So leadership is adjusting to the people that you are leading and the environment in which you are in and then to make it a successful mission, I guess.

P14: I would define it as someone who has the drive to make a difference in someone else's life and it doesn't have to be, you don't have to be in-charge of something, but you have to have a certain not perspective but just like a way to get other people involved and encouraged.

P15: Leadership is having a specific goal in mind and having the dedication and the motivation to work towards that goal, but you can't do it by yourself. You need to have the respect of your group and you need them to understand what you are doing and you need to encourage them throughout the process and you also need to give credit where credit is due because they are doing a lot of the work as well as you.

P16: I'd say it's much more about guiding, and it's as much about listening as it is about talking. And to really, I think to be a good leader you need to also listen to who you are trying to lead and not say that my way is the highway, you need to be open to new ideas and understand that somebody else might have a much better idea than you do. I think the best leaders incorporate all of those ideas.

P17: Now looking back I think I am always, not taught, but I learned that, I am taught, but I learned also that it's not, you don't have to have a position to be a leader you can just be a kid in the club and set a good role model, I think that's what's changed my viewpoint since I was little and started to now.

P18: I would say that leadership is a person who has the capacity to move a team to achieve, to achieve a goal. A person who has the vision and understands the final product of where they want to go and the strategy of how to get the whole team to that and part of that strategy involves, you know, the involvement of other team members as well and it's a balance because leaders have ideas, they have visions out there, but also just really be free and not feel stuck, like this is my way and it need to, this is how the project needs to come out, but to also understand that you know, more ideas can be very beneficial and other ideas and perspectives a lot of time in league we would have a certain way that we were trying to approach a mission and a robot would be maneuvering around these things and sometimes the leader in the situation, the person who was organizing the programming and the other members who are also working on that project, the leader had to say you know, we just got a really bare down and get this until it works and other times the leader had to say we have to sort of re-invent our approach. And it takes a leader to know how to move the team in that direction.

P19: I'd say leadership is knowing when to lead, you know, it's not bad to delegate responsibilities to other people and as a leader you want to be inspiring to others. To get them involved in different things and you know, you are not the dictator.
P20: Leadership today for me is something where the major goal of what you are doing as a leader is to allow people to work and or develop to the best of their ability. That means that your job is to be the catalyst that gives them that environment for their growth. I used to say leadership was, you know, you tell people what to do. But that isn't it. By the time I hit high school, i defined leadership as being there, explaining things to kids, teaching them. It's more of a teaching role than a boss/employer role.
BIOGRAPHICAL SKETCH

Ashley N. Kinkade was born June 20, 1990 in Oskaloosa, Iowa. She received her Bachelor of Arts degree from Central College in 2012 with a license to teach Elementary Education and went on to serve a year as an AmeriCorps member in Story County, Iowa. As a 9 year 4-H member and through working and interacting with the state 4-H staff, she developed a passion for evaluating program effectiveness through Extension and Outreach programs. During her time as a master's student she worked as a Teaching and Research Assistant for Iowa State University's Department of Human Development and Family Studies from 2013-2014. She is looking forward to beginning her next position with Story County Extension and Outreach as the Family Nutrition Program Assistant (FNP).