

Comparing 4-H Volunteer Training Perceptions
Among 4-H Volunteers and Educators

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Abstract

Adult volunteers are an integral part of the 4-H program. Volunteers assist with all aspects of the 4-H program. Adult volunteers serve as club leaders, project leaders, chaperones, and are present at all 4-H activities. The purpose of the study was to compare 4-H volunteer training perceptions among 4-H volunteers and 4-H Educators and Coordinators. In particular, this study sought to find out how volunteers value their prior trainings, what topics do volunteers request further trainings on, how volunteers seek advice on volunteer related problems, and how 4-H Educators and Coordinators support 4-H volunteers with trainings?

This research was conducted by using two surveys, and was distributed and analyzed using an online survey tool, Qualtrics. 4-H volunteers and 4-H Educators and Coordinators in six counties in Northwest Wisconsin were invited to participate in this study via email. The surveys consisted of multiple choice, Likert-type scale, and open-ended questions. The questions in the volunteer survey sought to determine demographics such as length of service and type of volunteer roles as well as perceptions of volunteers regarding training. The educator and coordinator survey sought to finding demographic information on length of service, and perceptions of educators and coordinators on volunteer training.

Results of this research showed that volunteers rated the prior trainings they had received as beneficial. Volunteers were also likely to attend additional volunteer trainings. The volunteers indicated that future volunteer trainings should include the topic areas of 4-H knowledge, leadership development, and teaching skills. The educators and coordinators surveyed rated the trainings taught as helpful to volunteers. This study also showed a need for

additional research on the topic of 4-H volunteer training to aid 4-H Educators and Coordinators in increasing volunteer satisfaction with volunteer training.

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Table of Contents

	Page
Chapter I Introduction	1
Chapter II Review of Literature	6
Chapter III Methods	13
Chapter IV Results	17
Chapter V Discussion, Recommendations, Conclusions	44
References	51
Appendix A Emails, follow-ups and thanks yours to participants.....	53
Appendix B Surveys	56
Appendix C Responses to Open – Ended Questions	63

List of Tables

	Page
Table 1- Informed Consent	17
Table 2-Number of Years as 4-H Volunteer	18
Table 3- Volunteer Roles	18
Table 4- Other Responses to Volunteer Roles	19
Table 5- Club Management	20
Table 6- Planning Activities and Events	20
Table 7- Teaching Members	21
Table 8- Working in Youth Adult Partnerships	21
Table 9- Working with Fellow Adults	22
Table 10- Recruitment of 4-H Members	22
Table 11-Type of Training Attended and Training Format	23
Table 12- Other Training Methods	23
Table 13- Was Training Required by County.....	24
Table 14- Why Did You Attend Training	25
Table 15-Training Rating	25
Table 16- Frequency Using Knowledge Gained at Training	26
Table 17-Club Management	27
Table 18-Team Building Skills	27
Table 19-Leadership Development.....	28
Table 20-Teaching Skills	28
Table 21-Inclusion	29
Table 22-4-H Knowledge	29
Table 23-Other	30
Table 24-Interest Level in Further Training Topics	31
Table 25-Delivery Mode of Training	32
Table 26-Other Responses for Delivery Mode	32
Table 27- Likeliness to Attend Further Trainings	33
Table 28-Number of Times Questions Asked	33

List of Tables

	Page
Table 29- Types of Questions Asked	34
Table 30- Resources Used	35
Table 31- Educator Informed Consent.....	36
Table 32- Educator- Number of Years as 4-H Educator & Coordinator	37
Table 33- Educator Skill Level Rating Teaching Trainings	37
Table 34- Trainings Taught by Educators & Coordinators	38
Table 35- Number of VIP Initial Trainings Taught	38
Table 36- Number of Annual Volunteer Trainings Taught	39
Table 37- Number of Additional Volunteer Trainings Taught.....	39
Table 38- Preferred Method for Teaching Volunteer Trainings	40
Table 39- 4-H Educators and Coordinators Rating of Training	41
Table 40- Educator & Coordinator Resources Used Preparing Training	41
Table 41- Frequency of 4-H Educators and Coordinators Approached	42
With Questions	
Table 42- Categories of Questions 4-H Educators and Coordinators are	43
Approached with	
Table 43- How 4-H Educators and Coordinators Answer Questions	43

Chapter 1-Introduction

Need for Study

4-H is America's largest youth organization with nearly 6 million youth participants (National 4-H Organization, n.d.). 4-H reaches youth in every corner of the nation, and members engage in more activities than just cows and plows. In the 21st century, 4-H activities range from STEM and agriculture and animal science to citizenship and communication arts.

The 4-H program relies heavily on adult volunteers to help with all aspects of 4-H programming. Adult volunteers are club leaders, project leaders, camp and conference chaperones, and are present at all 4-H activities. Volunteers work alongside 4-H Educators and Coordinators to enrich the lives of youth members. Volunteers dedicate their time and talents to youth without expecting anything in return.

Nationwide, there are over 500,000 volunteers providing support to 4-H members (National 4-H Organization, n.d.). As of 2018 enrollment numbers there are 9,693 adult volunteers that work with 55,370 youth members in Wisconsin 4-H. (Wisconsin 4-H, n.d.). 4-H volunteers provide leadership and teach youth valuable skills.

Prior to becoming a volunteer, interested adults are required to participate in volunteer training in order to prepare them for working with youth, these trainings are VIP Initial Volunteer training and mandated reporter training (Pierce County 4-H Informant, 2019). Also, in Wisconsin as part of the 4-H Charter renewal process, 4-H club leaders are required to attend annual leader training (4-H Charter Completion Guide, n.d.). All 4-H volunteers are invited to attend this training as well. The Wisconsin 4-H program develops a yearly training module, and 4-H Educators and Coordinators teach the training in their local counties.

Wisconsin 4-H Educators and Coordinators provide support to all 4-H volunteers. 4-H Educators and Coordinators do so by training volunteers, answering questions, and are a positive example of interacting and impacting the lives of youth.

Statement of Problem

4-H volunteers are needed in every county to help the 4-H program operate and provide educational programs for youth. 4-H volunteers are trained by county 4-H Educators and Coordinators and are then expected to be ready to lead and aid with 4-H programming. County 4-H Educators and Coordinators might not know what training topics the volunteers desire or how volunteers wish to receive training. Educated and reliable volunteers are needed to continue the 4-H programming in the state of Wisconsin. The target audience of the study was current Wisconsin 4-H volunteers and 4-H Educators and Coordinators because of their knowledge of volunteer training and potential feedback based on previous training experiences.

Purpose of Study

The primary purpose of this study is to compare 4-H volunteer training perceptions among 4-H volunteers and 4-H Educators and Coordinators. In the state of Wisconsin new volunteers are continuously joining 4-H, and current volunteers are constantly applying their volunteer knowledge to work with youth. 4-H Educators and Coordinators are training 4-H volunteers throughout the year to improve their volunteer skills.

It is vital that volunteers are properly trained prior to engaging with youth. This ensures that volunteers are ready to provide opportunities for learning and life skill development. 4-H volunteers are often a first point of contact for 4-H members, and less than ideal volunteers might lead to negative 4-H experiences. Thus, it is important that 4-H Educators and Coordinators understand how to train volunteers for the benefits of youth involved.

The volunteer's training desires and needs will be used to gain a better understanding of volunteers training needs. In addition, the study findings may assist statewide 4-H Educators and Coordinators with volunteer training. The opinions of 4-H Educators and Coordinators and their knowledge of volunteer training may help develop professional development topics for volunteer trainings.

Objectives

The following objectives were developed to gain insight into 4-H volunteer training perceptions among volunteers and 4-H Educators and Coordinators.

1. How do volunteers value their prior trainings?
2. What topics do volunteers request further trainings on?
3. How do volunteers seek advice on volunteer related problems?
4. How do 4-H Educators and Coordinators support 4-H volunteers with trainings?

Additional background information was needed to create groundwork for the research including length of volunteer service, type of volunteer role, and length of service of 4-H Educators and Coordinators.

The overall goal of this study was to gather more information on 4-H volunteer training from volunteers and 4-H Educators and Coordinators. The intent is to use the information to better train volunteers by aiding 4-H Educators and Coordinators in creating training materials and programs.

Definitions

4-H volunteer: For the purposes of this study, a 4-H volunteer encompasses all registered volunteers in the 4-H program. In Wisconsin, all 4-H volunteers must be at least 18 years of age or older, must pass a national background check, and must attend an initial 4-H volunteer training called VIP training (Pierce County 4-H January/February Informant).

4-H Educator and Coordinator: For the purposes of this study, 4-H Educators and Coordinators are University of Wisconsin Extension employees that support the Wisconsin 4-H program by development, delivery, and evaluation of educational programs. 4-H Educators and Coordinators work with 4-H youth and volunteers on a regular basis.

Assumptions

For this study, it is important to note the following assumptions:

1. Participants will be honest and will answer questions without bias.
2. Participants will give their true opinions to the questions.

Limitations

For this study, it is important to note the following limitations:

1. Data collection was limited to Wisconsin 4-H volunteers and Wisconsin 4-H Educator and Coordinators in six counties.
2. Data collection from respondents was limited to the email address on file with the county 4-H programs.
3. Data collection was limited to the 4-H volunteers and 4-H Educators or Coordinators that responded to the online survey.
4. Data collection was limited based on how the respondents interpreted the terms and questions used in the survey.

5. Data collection is limited due to the distribution method which creates a lack of population.

Chapter II – Review of Literature

What is 4-H?

4-H is the largest youth development organization in America, with 6.5 million members, and has 500,000 adult volunteers (*National 4-H Organization*, n.d.). The first 4-H Clubs were called the “Tomato Club” or “Corn Growing Club” and were started in 1902 in Ohio. At the same time in Minnesota, local agriculture after school clubs and fairs were formed (National 4-H Organization, n.d.). The 4-H clover pin was created in 1910, and by 1912 they were officially called 4-H clubs. 4-H programs were started to teach youth about agriculture.

Today, 4-H is a Youth Development program of Cooperative Extension. Cooperative Extension is a federally funded program at the state and county levels. It is a partnership of the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA), which is a part of the United States Department of Agriculture (USDA), and with 100 land-grant universities across the nation (*National 4-H Organization*, n.d.). There are 3,000 county extension offices across the nation. There are nearly 3,500 professionals in Cooperative Extension working with the 4-H Program. By combining the resources of local, state, and federal governments, Cooperative Extension is formed to have educational, knowledgeable, and researched based programs.

With the foundation of Cooperative Extension, 4-H programs are in every county in every state in the United States, the District of Columbia, five U.S. territories, and 80 countries world-wide (*National 4-H Organization*, n.d.). The 4-H program runs in urban, suburban, and rural areas across the United States.

Originally, 4-H was formed to focus on agriculture in rural areas, but with advance of cooperative extension, it has spread to include all types of educational programming. Today, 4-H programming includes science, health, agriculture and civic engagement. These programs

allow for a wide variety of 4-H projects ranging from rocketry, cats, arts and crafts, computers, service learning, entrepreneurship, and forestry. A 4-H philosophy is “learn by doing”, which encourages youth to complete hands on projects. Youth are mentored and encouraged by adult volunteers and extension educators to participate in leadership roles. 4-H programs are available but not limited to 4-H community clubs, afterschool clubs, and camps. 4-H is available to youth ages eight to eighteen, and the Cloverbud program is available to youth ages five to seven. 4-H is now a program that offers something for all youth, and by allowing youth to be engaged in their own learning, the benefits are endless. Studies have proven that 4-H members are four times as likely to give back to their communities, two times as likely to make healthier choices, and two times as likely to participate in STEM activities (*National 4-H Organization, n.d.*). Overall, 4-H is an extensive learning experience for youth to gain life skills, knowledge, and work with caring adults and extension educators to become productive members of society and future leaders.

4-H in Wisconsin

The Wisconsin 4-H program currently falls under University of Wisconsin- Extension System. 4-H is active in each of the 72 counties in Wisconsin. 4-H is offered in each county by University of Wisconsin Extension staff and faculty. These staff and faculty members are educated in youth development and have titles such as 4-H Youth Development Educators and 4-H Program Coordinators. While 4-H programs are different in each county, there are a number of state supported 4-H programs that are open to all members including camps and conference such as Wisconsin 4-H and Youth Conference, Arts Camp, Area Animal Science Days, Wisconsin 4-H Horse Expo, and supported national opportunities such as Citizenship Washington Focus, National 4-H Conference, and National 4-H Congress (Wisconsin 4-H, n.d.).

The mission of Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development is “UW- Extension 4-H Youth Development integrates research, education and community-based partnerships, enabling youth to learn and practice skills to be productive citizens.” (Wisconsin 4-H Youth Development, Facebook mission, n.d.). Wisconsin 4-H has established a wide range of projects available for member’s involvement. There are nine project categories that include animal sciences; arts, and communication; community involvement; family, home and health; mechanical sciences; natural sciences; plant and soil science; natural resources; STEM (science, technology, engineering, and math); and younger members. Within these project categories, there are over 70 individual projects to choose from (Wisconsin 4-H, n.d.). By engaging in projects, the goal is for youth to learn valuable life skills such as communication, working with others, and problem solving (Wisconsin 4-H, n.d.).

In Wisconsin, 4-H is available to youth in third grade through one year after high school. Youth in kindergarten- second grade can join the Cloverbud program, where they participate in age appropriate 4-H activities preparing them for future 4-H memberships. There are multiple ways for youth to be involved in 4-H, but the majority are involved in 4-H community club programs. As of 2018, the Wisconsin 4-H program has 55,370 youth participants. The community club has the most members with 29,081. There are 9,963 adult volunteers working with the Wisconsin 4-H program to support youth and the 4-H program (Wisconsin 4-H, n.d.). There are nearly 100 4-H Educators and Coordinators currently working in Wisconsin (Extension Staff Directory, n.d.).

Volunteer Demographics

While the 4-H Youth Development program is geared towards youth development, 4-H Educators and Coordinators use volunteers in a multitude of ways, ranging from planning and

organization projects to leading activities and programs. There are many different volunteer roles in Wisconsin 4-H. These roles include club organizational leader that is responsible for the 4-H club; activity leader who works to plan club or county wide activities; county committee member, who serves on a county wide committee like the horse project committee; project leader, who shares their times and talents in a specific project area; and resource leader that can serve in multiple roles based on the club or county needs (De Montmollin, 2015). A survey of volunteers in the North Central Region Volunteer Forum from 12 states was conducted in 2012. This study focused on volunteer demographics and contributions to 4-H. Over 3,300 surveys were returned and the data was analyzed. One of the key findings was that 85% of respondents were female, and all respondents had achieved a high school diploma with nearly half (47%) of respondents reported having a Bachelor's degree. This suggests that 4-H volunteers are well educated adults. The majority of volunteers were between the ages of 42-50 years old. The majority (80%) of volunteers report being club leaders/organizational leaders or project leaders (Nippolt et al., 2012). 65% of adult volunteers have served in their role for less than ten years, with 36% of volunteers serving for less than five years. (Nippolt et al., 2012). A national study of 520 volunteers reported similar findings. Women were volunteers the most, making up 79% of volunteers. The mean age of volunteers was 46.33, and mean length of service was 11.40 years, and 30% of volunteers had a Bachelor's degree. This study also showed that on average adult 4-H volunteers report volunteering for two organizations. (Culp et al., 2005). Overall, adult volunteers come from a wide range of backgrounds, experiences and skill levels which can increase the need for volunteer training.

Volunteer Training Benefits

In Oregon, 969 Extension volunteers from many different programs including 4-H, Master Gardeners, Food and Nutrition Educators, Family Community Leadership, and Master Recyclers. The volunteers selected had volunteered with Oregon Extension the past two-three years. When volunteers were questioned about previous training, 62% of volunteers reported their prior training was effective (Baker et al., 2000). The Fox et al. study surveyed 303 volunteers after they had completed a five-hour volunteer training. Volunteers were asked questions regarding to the training benefits. Overall, 96% of volunteers broadened their knowledge of new 4-H areas, 93% of increased their knowledge of youth development, and 97% of volunteers were motivated to expand their role in 4-H (Fox et. al., 2009).

Training Topics

Volunteers are required to have many different skills to be successful volunteers. The objective of a study completed in 2007 by Ken Culp, Renee McKee and Patrick Nestor was to identify the core competencies that volunteers need to possess. A total of 914 4-H volunteers, extension educators, and extension specialists were sampled across the United States. In the survey, responders were asked to identify current or future skills or competencies that past or current volunteers should possess. As a result, a list of 32 competencies was developed. The top three competencies were communication, organization/planning skills, and subject matter skills/knowledge. The results were also broken down into regions, and each region selected different top competencies. Researchers concluded that the list of competencies required by volunteers did vary across the United States, therefore identical volunteer training cannot be used across the entire nation without amending the training to meet specific needs. The Fox et al. study also researched training topics. Volunteers ranked the most helpful training topics as:

member opportunities, leadership development, and volunteer opportunities. Researchers concluded that in order for volunteer training to be successful, training needs to be focused on topics that volunteers find helpful and relevant.

Training Methods

There are many different methods applicable for training volunteers. The Fox et al., study asked volunteers that just completed a five-hour face to face training session, what methods they prefer to receive training. The top three methods were group training, emailed information, and small group support. Another study researched e-learning methods. This study was distributed to adults that were applying to be 4-H volunteers after they had completed “e-Learning for Volunteers” online course (Ouellette et al., 2014). The survey asked questions including why volunteers participated in the e-learning, and what volunteers liked or didn’t like about the e-learning. The results showed that volunteers chose to participate in the e-learning for various reasons with the top three being: required training for the county, fits their schedule, and required prior to volunteer application. Volunteers rated liking the flexibility, ease of use, and quality of materials in the training. Volunteers rated not liking the impersonal and non-interactive aspects of training. Researchers concluded that the online learning is a viable way of training 4-H volunteers, however the need for in-person training still exists.

Educator Perceptions

A study completed in 1986 focuses on the question and perhaps myth, that many Extension Educators believe that 4-H volunteers don’t want to participate in leadership development (Cook et al., 1986). This study surveyed 1,533 volunteers using a need/interest assessment. Overall, this study debunked the myth that volunteers do not desire training. The needs assessment proved that volunteers wanted to receive training no matter how many years

they served as a volunteer. Arnold et al. completed a survey in 2009 that surveyed 175 volunteers in Oregon on their satisfaction, experience, and volunteer understanding. Satisfaction questions included asking if the information provided was understandable, are the education materials of high quality, does the county staff respond to correspondence, and asking if the agent uses appropriate teaching for leaders. Overall, 4-H volunteers did overwhelmingly agree and have high satisfaction levels. The majority (86.6%) of volunteers feel that county staff cares about their needs, 86.7% of volunteers say that agent uses appropriate teaching for leaders, and 93% of volunteers agree that county staff responds to correspondence in a timely matter. Researchers conclude that training, sustaining, recognizing, and evaluating volunteers are important steps in making sure 4-H programs are successful (Arnold et. al., 2009).

Chapter III- Methods

This study was designed to evaluate 4-H volunteer training perceptions among 4-H volunteers and 4-H Educators and Coordinators. The main objectives of this study were designed to address were:

1. How do volunteers value their prior trainings?
2. What topics do volunteers request further trainings on?
3. How do volunteers seek advice on volunteer related problems?
4. How do 4-H Educators and Coordinators support 4-H volunteers with trainings?

In order to answer these questions, surveys were created for Wisconsin 4-H volunteers and Wisconsin 4-H Educators and Coordinators. Because the target audience for this survey was Wisconsin 4-H volunteers and 4-H Educators and Coordinators, the focus was on six individual counties in Wisconsin. The study identified six counties in the northwest region of Wisconsin, with a range of population of members and volunteers and 4-H Educators and Coordinators currently serving in the counties. Thus, the scope of this survey was administered to 4-H volunteers and 4-H Educators and Coordinators within these counties. After the survey was completed and target audience was formed, the IRB Human Subjects Review Research Review Protocol was completed and submitted for approval along with the surveys to the University of Wisconsin-River Falls Institutional Review Board. This was approved before proceeding with the research project (approval number H2018-T12).

After the IRB approval process was complete, the next step was distributing the surveys. The research study was completed by using the internet-bases evaluation tool created in

Qualtrics. Two surveys were created, titled “4-H Volunteer Training- Volunteer Evaluation Survey” and “4-H Volunteer Training- Educator Evaluation Survey”. Both surveys can be found in Appendix B. 4-H volunteers and 4-H Educators and Coordinators previously identified, were part of the survey. The surveys were distributed using email sent to 4-H Educators and Coordinators. Email addresses were found by using UW-Extension county websites.

An email was sent to 4-H Educators and Coordinators in six Wisconsin counties with background information regarding the “4-H Volunteer Training- Volunteer Evaluation Survey” and a link to the survey. A total of seven 4-H Educators and Coordinators received this email for the six different counties. The email asked the 4-H Educators and Coordinators to forward the survey link on to the 4-H volunteers in their county via email. This method was used to ensure that 4-H volunteer participants received the survey link from a reputable source and would hopefully increase the completion rate. In turn, this also ensured participation anonymity. The online survey was available for completion for ten days. A reminder email was sent to the county 4-H Educators and Coordinators in three days, regarding forwarding the email to the county 4-H volunteers. The initial email invite and reminder email sent to county 4-H Educators and Coordinators is included in Appendix A.

Following the initial email regarding the volunteer survey, the same seven 4-H Educators and Coordinators received an email with an invitation to complete the “4-H Volunteer Training- Educator Evaluation Survey”. The email explained the research and asked the 4-H Educators and Coordinators to complete the survey that was linked in the email. Participation anonymity was granted the entire time via autonomous survey links. The online survey was open in Qualtrics for ten days for the 4-H Educators and Coordinators to finish. A reminder email was sent to the county 4-H Educators and Coordinators three days following the initial email

reminding them to complete the survey. A copy of the email invitation and reminder email sent to the seven 4-H Educators and Coordinators is in Appendix A.

After the participants opened the provided survey link, it opened directly to the Qualtrics survey. Once in Qualtrics, it showed the first survey question. The first question was an informed consent statement. To ensure participant anonymity, it required no signature. Participants read the informed consent statement, and if they agreed to voluntarily participate in the survey, answered “yes” which directly brought them to the remaining questions. If participants did not agree to participate, and answered “no”, it immediately ended the survey. This process was the same for the volunteer and 4-H Educator and Coordinator surveys.

All participants completed preliminary questions about their background information asking about years of involvement in their 4-H roles. The volunteer survey also included a question specifically asking what volunteer roles they fulfil. The first portion in the volunteer survey asked volunteers regarding their comfort level with volunteer competencies, and then asking what previous trainings they have attended. The subsequent questions asked volunteers how they use the information learned, and if they are interested in further training. The last portion asked volunteers questions regarding how they seek advice on their volunteer roles. There was a variety of closed and open-ended questions. Some questions used Likert-scales types to determine the volunteer’s perceptions on volunteer training. The educator and coordinator survey first asked participants to rate their skill level regarding teaching volunteer training, and how often teach volunteer training. The second part asked 4-H Educators and Coordinators how they prepare for trainings. The last portion asked participants how they assist volunteers with their questions. In the survey, there were both closed and open-ended questions. Questions also included Likert-type scales to determine 4-H Educators and Coordinators

perceptions on volunteer training. After all participants completed, the survey was submitted. The survey responses were automatically recorded in Qualtrics.

4-H volunteers received the survey in the six counties in Northwest Wisconsin, and 99 volunteers completed the survey. Seven 4-H Educators and Coordinators that were invited to complete the survey, five completed the survey, for a response rate of 71%. The data was collected using the Qualtrics online survey system. Data was summarized and analyzed using tools in Qualtrics and Excel.

Chapter IV- Results

This research survey collected and analyzed data through the use of an online program Qualtrics. The volunteer research study had 17 multiple choice and open-ended questions. Some of the questions were answered based on responses to previous questions, meaning not all questions were answered. Meaning, not all participants answered all of the questions. A total of 99 responses were collected. The results of the surveys are recorded in the charts and tables that follow. The open ended questions are summarized in this section, but all of the responses will be recorded in Appendix C.

The first survey question asked was the informed consent. This was meant to ensure that the survey responders consented to taking the survey. If responders consented to the survey, they selected yes. If responders did not consent, they selected no. All of the responses are yes, since the no responses immediately exited the survey.

Table 1

Informed Consent

Answer	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	99	100.0%
No	0	
	99 total responses	100.0%

The purpose of the second question was to determine how long participants had served as a 4-H volunteer. This information is helpful when looking at other answers in the survey, as it can be used to assess the knowledge level and experience of participants. This data is shown in table 2. The majority of volunteers (32.5%) stated that they had served as volunteers for 1-5 years. It should be noted, that 52% of volunteers have served for less than 10 years.

Table 2

Number of years as of 4-H volunteer

Answer	<i>f</i>	%
Less than 1 year	7	7.87%
1-5 years	29	32.5%
6-10 years	17	19.10%
11-20 years	22	24.72%
21-30 years	7	7.87%
30 years or more	7	7.87%
	89 total responses	100%

The third question asked participants what volunteer roles they serve in. The purpose of this question is to identify the participant's involvement as volunteers. There were four responses to choose from, as well as an open-ended choice. Participants were able to select all choices that applied to their roles. The open-ended answers will be summarized below with the whole results in Appendix C. The majority (39.575) of participants identified themselves as project leaders. Volunteers who selected the other category, mostly identified themselves as 'adult volunteers' or 'parents who volunteer'.

Table 3

Volunteer Roles

Answer	<i>f</i>	%
Club leader	39	28.06%
County-wide committee member	30	21.58%
Project leader	55	39.57%
Other	15	10.79%
	139 total responses	100%

Table 4

Other Responses to Volunteer Roles

Question	<i>f</i>
General volunteer	6
Parent volunteer	2
8 total responses	

The fourth question had participants rate their comfort level with six volunteer competencies using a Likert scale, with 1 being poor and 5 being excellent. The scale was as follows:

- 1- Poor
- 2- Fair
- 3- Good
- 4- Very good
- 5- Excellent

In order to understand the results, each item from question 4 has been broken down. The entire question can be found in the survey in Appendix B. The title of each table is the same as the statement that was listed in question 4.

The first competency was club management. As shown in table 4, the majority of participants (41.57%) ranked their comfort level as good. The mean was 3.7, meaning that more people ranked this comfort level as higher than a 3.

Table 5

Club Management

Answer	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
Poor	3	3.37%	-	-
Fair	9	10.11%	-	-
Good	20	22.17%	-	-
Very Good	37	41.57%	-	-
Excellent	20	22.47%	-	-
	89 total responses	100%	3.7	1.03

The second part in question four asked participants to rate their comfort level with the competency of planning activities and events. The highest ranking was very good, with 39.3% respondents selecting that ranking. The mean was 3.97 meaning more people were comfortable with this competency than were not.

Table 6

Planning Activities and Events

Answer	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
Poor	2	2.25%	-	-
Fair	5	5.62%	-	-
Good	17	29.89%	-	-
Very Good	35	39.33%	-	-
Excellent	32	36.75%	-	-
	89 total responses	100%	3.97	1.13

Item 3 in question 4 asked participants to rate their comfort level with teaching members. The highest skill level was excellent with 35.96% (32 out of 89 responses). The mean was 3.95 meaning that more people were comfortable with this competency than were not.

Table 7

Teaching Members

Answer	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
Poor	0	0%	-	-
Fair	7	8.05%	-	-
Good	22	29.89%	-	-
Very Good	26	36.78%	-	-
Excellent	32	35.96%	-	-
	89 Total responses	100%	3.95	0.97

Item 4, asked volunteers to rate their comfort level working in youth-adult partnerships. The majority of volunteers ranked their comfort level in the very good category, with 39.33%. The mean was 4.07 meaning that more people were comfortable with this competency than were not.

Table 8

Working in Youth-Adult Partnerships

Answer	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
Poor	0	0%	-	-
Fair	4	4.49%	-	-
Good	18	20.22%	-	-
Very Good	35	39.33%	-	-
Excellent	32	35.96%	-	-
	87 total responses	100 %	4.07	0.86

The fifth item in question 4 asked volunteers to rate their comfort level with working with fellow adults. The category very good had the highest percentage with 37.08%. Interestingly, the mean was 4.02 meaning that more people were comfortable with this competency than were not.

Table 9

Working with Fellow Adults

Answer	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
Poor	0	0%	-	-
Fair	6	6.74%	-	-
Good	18	37.08%	-	-
Very Good	33	37.08%	-	-
Excellent	32	35.96%	-	-
89 Total responses		100%	4.02	0.91

The sixth portion of question 4, asked participants to rate their comfort level with recruitment of 4-H members. The majority (35.96) of volunteers rated their competency in the good category. The mean was 3.45 meaning that more people were comfortable with this competency than were not.

Table 10

Recruitment of 4-H Members

Answer	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
Poor	4	4.49%	-	-
Fair	13	14.61%	-	-
Good	32	35.96%	-	-
Very Good	19	21.35%	-	-
Excellent	21	23.60%	-	-
89 total responses		100 %	3.45	1.13

Question number 5 asked volunteers what trainings they had attended in the past year, and also asked what format was used to teach the trainings. The majority of volunteers reported attended annual leader training with a 41.67%. Also, the majority of the participants attended

this training in person with 90.63%. The results of the open-ended question will be in Appendix C, but the summary of results will be below.

Table 11

Type of Training Attended and Training Format

Question: Training attended	Yes		No		Total responses	
	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>		
No training	39.34%	24	60.66%	37		61
Annual leader training	41.67%	30	58.33%	42		72
VIP initial volunteer training	34.33%	23	65.67%	44		67
Additional county provided training	28.13%	18	71.88%	46		64
Other (please specify)	24.14%	7	75.86%	22		29

Question: Training method	In person		Online		Other		Total Responses
	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	
Annual leader training	90.63%	29	9.38%	3	0.00%	0	32
VIP initial volunteer training	82.61%	19	13.04%	3	4.35%	1	23
Additional county provided training	82.35%	14	17.65%	3	0.00%	0	17
Other (please specify)	66.67%	4	16.67%	1	16.67%	1	6

Question six asked volunteers to clarify what other methods of trainings they have attended, this was an open-ended question. The results of the open-ended question will be in Appendix C, but the summary of results will be below.

Responses for other selection in training method:

Table 12

Other Training Methods

Question: other methods	<i>f</i>
Combination of in person/online	2
In-person	4
Other methods not described-	2
	8 total responses

Question seven, asked participants if the training they attended was required by the county. The majority (75%) of volunteers reported attending training because it was required by the county.

Table 13

Was training required by county

Answer	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	57	75%
No	19	25%
76 total responses		100%

Question eight was a follow up question to the above question, meaning that not all participants answered this question. This question was open-ended. The responses are categorized below. All response will be put in Appendix C.

Table 14

Why Did you Attend Training

Questions- Reason for attending	<i>f</i>
Personal growth	8
Required by state	2
Didn't attend training	2
14 responses	

Question number nine, asked volunteers to rate the initial 4-H volunteer training they had received using a scale of 1-5. The following scale was used:

- 1- Poor
- 2- Fair
- 3- Good
- 4- Very good
- 5- Excellent

A majority of participants rated the training good with 46.43% (39 out of 84). The mean was 3.4, meaning that more people ranked the training higher than a 3.

Table 15

Training rating

Answer	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	Standard deviation
1-Poor	3	3.57%	-	-
2- Fair	7	8.33%	-	-
3-Good	39	46.43%	-	-
4-Very good	23	27.38%	-	-
5-Excellent	12	14.29%	-	-
	84 total responses	100%	3.4	0.95

Question number ten, asked volunteers how frequently they used the knowledge they gained at volunteer training. A majority of volunteers (61.63%,) reported using the knowledge they gained at training a few times a year. Interesting to note, 10% volunteers reported not using the knowledge gained at training at all.

Table 16
Frequency using Knowledge Gained at Training

Answer	<i>f</i>	%
Not at all	9	10.47%
A few times a year	53	61.63%
Every couple of months (about 6 times a year)	13	15.12%
About once a month	11	12.79%
	86 total responses	100%

Question number eleven, had volunteers rate eight topics that they learned at volunteer training in terms of helpfulness to their volunteer roles. The following scale was used

N/A- topic not covered at training

1- Not at all helpful

2- Slightly helpful

3- Somewhat helpful

4- Very helpful

To fully understand the results, each training topic will be put into its own table. The entire question can be found in the survey in Appendix B. The title of each table is the same as the statement that was listed in question eleven.

The first category was club management. The majority of volunteers ranked the topic as somewhat helpful (31.33%). It must be noted, that 23 volunteers out of 83 (27.71%) reported that this topic was not covered at trainings they have attended. The mean was 3.04 meaning more people rated this topic as helpful than not.

Table 17

Club Management

Answer	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
N/A	23	27.71%	-	-
1- Not at all helpful	3	3.61%	-	-
2- Slightly helpul	18	21.69%	-	-
3- Somewhat helpful	26	31.33%	-	-
4- Very helpful	13	15.66%	-	-
	83total responses	100%	3.04	1.44

The second topic in question eleven was team building skills. The majority of volunteers reported that the topic was somewhat helpful (33.33%). The mean was 3.24 meaning more people rated this topic as helpful than not.

Table 18

Team Building Skills

Answer	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
N/A	16	19.05%	-	-
1- Not at all helpful	4	4.76%	-	-
2- Slightly helpful	22	26.19%	-	-
3- Somewhat helpful	28	33.33%	-	-
4- Very helpful	14	16.67%	-	-
	84 total responses	100%	3.24	1.44

The third topic in question eleven was leadership development. 40.48% of volunteers report the topic as somewhat helpful. The mean was 3.23 meaning more people rated this topic as helpful than not.

Table 19

Leadership Development

Answer	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
N/A	16	19.05%	-	-
1- Not at all helpful	5	5.95%	-	-
2- Slightly helpful	18	21.43%	-	-
3- Somewhat helpful	34	40.48%	-	-
4- Very helpful	11	14.29%	-	-
	84 total responses	100%	3.23	1.3

The next topic in question eleven was teaching skills. The majority of volunteers rated this topic as somewhat helpful (32.14%). The mean was 3.13 meaning more people rated this topic as helpful than not.

Table 20

Teaching skills

Answer	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
N/A	18	21.43%	-	-
1- Not at all helpful	4	4.76%	-	-
2- Slightly helpful	23	27.38%	-	-
3- Somewhat helpful	27	32.14%	-	-
4- Very helpful	12	14.29%	-	-
	84 total responses	100%	3.13	1.33

The next topic was inclusion. The majority of volunteers (39.02%) reported the topic as somewhat helpful. The mean was 3.43 meaning more people rated this topic as helpful than not.

Table 21

Inclusion

Answer	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
N/A	10	12.20%	-	-
1- Not at all helpful	5	6.10%	-	-
2- Slightly helpful	21	25.61%	-	-
3- Somewhat helpful	32	39.02%	-	-
4- Very helpful	14	17.07%	-	-
	82 total responses	100%	3.43	1.2

The sixth topic in the question number eleven was 4-H knowledge. The majority (69.98) of volunteers surveyed reported this topic being somewhat helpful or very helpful. The mean was 3.81 meaning more people rated this topic as helpful than not.

Table 22

4-H Knowledge

Answer	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
N/A	7	8.43%	-	-
1- Not at all helpful	3	3.61%	-	-
2- Slightly helpul	15	18.07%	-	-
3- Somewhat helpful	32	38.55%	-	-
4- Very helpful	26	31.33%	-	-
	83 total responses	100%	3.81	1.17

The last topic was other. The majority of volunteers responded that other topics were not covered at the trainings (55%). The mean was 2.35 meaning more people rated this topic as not helpful, than helpful.

Table 23

Other

Answer	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
N/A	11	55%	-	-
1- Not at all helpful	1	5%	-	-
2- Slightly helpful	3	15%	-	-
3- Somewhat helpful	0	0%	-	-
4- Very helpful	5	25%	-	-
	20 total responses	%	2.35	1.68

Question 12, required volunteers rate topics for further training, using a four-point Likert scale. There were eight topics for volunteers to rate. The scale was as follows:

- 1- Not at all interested
- 2- Slightly interested
- 3- Somewhat interested
- 4- Very interested

The topic that volunteers rated the highest was 4-H knowledge, with 68.61% of volunteers somewhat or very interested in this topic.

Table 24

Interest Level in Further Training Topic

Question	1- Not at all interested		2- Slightly interested		3- Somewhat interested		4- Very interested		Total responses
	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	%	<i>f</i>	
Club Management	18.60%	16	20.93%	18	43.02%	37	17.44%	15	86
Team building skills	16.64%	11	22.99%	20	40.23%	35	24.14%	21	87
Leadership	11.49%	10	20.69%	18	37.93%	33	29.89%	26	87
Conflict resolution	16.28%	14	22.09%	19	36.05%	31	25.58%	22	86
Teaching skills	12.79%	11	19.77%	17	35.53%	34	27.91%	24	86
Inclusion	20.93%	18	24.42%	21	37.21%	32	17.44%	15	86
4-H knowledge	12.79%	11	18.60%	16	45.35%	39	23.26%	20	86
Other	57.14%	8	14.29%	2	14.29%	2	14.29%	2	14

Question thirteen asked volunteers what delivery mode they preferred for the trainings. The options were in person, online or other. The other selection was opened ended where participants could enter their own answer. The results of the open-ended section will be summarized below. The answers in their entirety will be in Appendix C. The majority of volunteers (55.81%) prefer an in person delivery method for trainings

Table 25

Delivery Mode of Training

Answer	%	<i>f</i>
Online	38.37%	33
In-person	55.81%	48
Other (please specify)	5.81%	5
Total	100%	86 total responses

Table 26

Other Responses for Delivery Mode

Answer	%	<i>f</i>
Both in person and online	60%	3
Zoom	20%	1
Either	20%	1
	100%	5 total responses

Question fourteen had volunteers rate how likely they were to attend additional volunteer trainings using a six point Likert scale. The scale was as follows:

1-Very unlikely

2- Somewhat unlikely

3- Slightly unlikely

4- Slightly likely

5- Somewhat likely

6- Very likely

The majority (36.78%) of volunteers were somewhat likely to attend further volunteer trainings.

The mean was 4.17, showing that more volunteers agreed with this statement than not.

Table 27

Likelihood to Attend Further Trainings

Answer	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
1- Very unlikely	10	11.49%	-	-
2- somewhat unlikely	7	8.05%	-	-
3- Slightly unlikely	3	3.45%	-	-
4- Slightly likely	20	22.99%	-	-
5- Somewhat likely	32	36.78%	-	-
6- Very likely	15	17.24	-	-
	89 total responses	100%	4.17	1.56

The next question asked volunteers how often they have questions related to their volunteer working. The scale was as follows, none, once a year, between 2-5 times a year, 5-10 times a year, and 10 times or more a year. There was a tie for the majority (36.78%) with none, and between 2-5 times a year.

Table 28

Number of Times Questions Asked

Answer	<i>f</i>	%
None	32	36.78%
Once a year	7	8.05%
between 2-5 times a year	32	36.78%
5-10 times a year	9	10.34%
10 times or more a year	7	8.05
	87 total responses	100%

The next question was an open-ended question that allowed volunteers to write what questions they had related to their volunteer work. The answers will be summarized below. The answerers in their entirety will be in Appendix C. The category with the most questions was administrative with 55% of the questions.

Table 29

Types of Questions Asked

Answer	<i>f</i>
Conflict	3
Youth/Adult Partnerships	1
Administrative	18
4-H online/ Registration	3
Event related	7
Too many questions	1
	33 total responses

Question number seventeen asked volunteers the first resource they used when they had questions related to their volunteer work. The choices were, fellow volunteers/leaders, 4-H Extension Educator/Coordinator, 4-H materials (online, books, handouts), non-4-H materials (online, books, handouts) and other resources. The majority (54.65%) volunteers reported asking fellow volunteer and leaders to answer their volunteer related questions.

Table 30

Resources Used

Answer	<i>f</i>	%
Fellow volunteer/ Leaders	47	54.65%
4-H Extension educators/ Coordinators	36	41.86%
4-H materials	0	0%
Non-4-H materials	0	0%
Other resources	3	3.49%
	86 total responses	100%

The Educator and coordinator study collected and analyzed data through the use of an online program Qualtrics. The volunteer research study had 13 multiple choice and open-ended questions. Some of the questions were answered based on responses to previous questions, meaning not all questions were answered. Meaning, not all participants answered all of the questions. A total of 7 responses were collected. The results of the surveys are recorded in the charts and tables that follow. The open ended questions are summarized in this section, but all of the responses will be recorded in Appendix C.

The first survey question asked was the informed consent. This was meant to ensure survey responders consented to taking the survey. If responders consented to the survey, they selected yes. If responders did not consent, they selected no. All of the responses are yes, since the no responses immediately exited the survey.

Table 31

Educator Informed Consent

Answer	<i>f</i>	%
Yes	5	100.0%
No	0	
5 total responses		100.0%

The second survey question asked participants how many years they had served as a 4-H educator/coordinator. This information is helpful when looking at other answers in the survey, as it can be used to assess the knowledge level and experience of participants. There was no majority number of years chosen in this question. All respondents have served for a different range of year.

Table 32

Educator- Number of Years as of 4-H Educator & Coordinator

Answer	<i>f</i>	%
Less than 1 year	1	20%
1-5 years	1	20%
6-10 years	1	20%
11-20 years	0	20%
21-30 years	1	20%
30 years or more	1	20%
5 total responses		100%

The third question asked volunteers to rate their skill level on teaching the volunteer trainings. A five-point Likert scale was used as follows:

- 1- Poor
- 2- Fair
- 3- Good
- 4- Very good
- 5- Excellent

All of the responses reported having a skill level at good or above. There was a tie for the majority (20%), with good and very good. The mean was 3.8, meaning that more participants rated their skill level at a 3 or higher.

Table 33

Educator Skill Level Rating Teaching Trainings

Answer	<i>f</i>	%	Mean	Standard Deviation
1- Poor	0	0%	-	-
2- Fair	0	0%	-	-
3- Good	2	40%	-	-
4- Very good	2	40%	-	-
5- Excellent	1	20%	-	-
	5 total responses	100%	3.8	0.75

Question four asked 4-H Educators and Coordinators what trainings they have taught in the previous year. Participants were able to select all trainings that they have taught. There was an open-ended ‘other’ selection choice that participants could list other trainings they have taught. The open-ended answers will be listed below due to the small amount of answers. All of

the participants reported teaching VIP Initial volunteer training in the prior year, since 5 4-H Educators and Coordinators completed this survey, and 5 responses were recorded.

Table 34

Trainings taught by Educators and Coordinators

Answer	%	<i>f</i>
Annual leader training	30.77%	4
VIP initial volunteer training	38.46%	5
Additional county provided training	23.08%	3
Other (please specify)	7.69%	1
Total	100%	13 total selections

Open ended answers to other in question number four: Board Development, Counselor Training, Superintendent Training, etc.

The next question asked the volunteers/coordinators how often they teach specific training. The selection choices were once a year, between 2-5 times a year, 5-10 times a year, and 10 times or more a year. The majority (60%) of 4-H Educators and Coordinators reported teaching VIP Initial volunteer training once a year.

Table 35

Number of VIP Initial Trainings Taught

Answer	%	<i>f</i>
Zero times a year	20.00%	1
Once a year	60.00%	3
2-5 times a year	20.00%	1
5-10 times a year	0.00%	0
10 times a year or more	0.00%	0
Total	100%	5 total responses

Question number six, asked 4-H Educators and Coordinators how often they teach annual leader training to volunteers. The selection choices were once a year, between 2-5 times a year, 5-10 times a year, and 10 times or more a year. All of the participants (100%) reported teaching annual volunteer trainings between 2-5 times a year.

Table 36

Number of Annual Volunteer Trainings Taught

Answer	%	<i>f</i>
Zero times a year	0.00%	0
Once a year	0.00%	0
Between 2-5 times a year	100.00%	5
5-10 times a year	0.00%	0
10 times or more a year	0.00%	0
Total	100%	5 total responses

The seventh question asked 4-H Educators and Coordinators how many times they taught additional volunteer trainings in the past year. The majority (80%) of 4-H Educators and Coordinators reported teaching additional volunteer trainings between 2-5 times a year.

Table 37

Number of Additional Volunteer Trainings Taught

Answer	%	<i>f</i>
Zero times a year	20.00%	1
Once a year	0.00%	0
Between 2-5 times a year	80.00%	4
5-10 times a year	0.00%	0
10 times or more a year	0.00%	0
Total	100%	5 total responses

The eighth question asked 4-H Educators and Coordinators what their preferred method is for teaching volunteer trainings. The choices were online, in-person, and other. Participants

could write an answer in the open-ended answer choice for other. All of the 4-H Educators and Coordinators (100%) selected the training method of in-person.

Table 38

Preferred Method for Teaching Volunteer Trainings

Answer	%	<i>f</i>
Online	0.00%	0
In-person	100.00%	5
Other (please specify)	0.00%	0
Total	100%	5 total responses

The ninth question asked 4-H Educators and Coordinators to rate the trainings they teach in in terms of helpfulness to volunteers. There was a 5-point Likert scale developed using the following points:

- 1- Not at all helpful
- 2- Slightly helpful
- 3- Somewhat helpful
- 4- Very helpful

The majority (60%) of volunteers rated the trainings they taught at the very helpful level. The mean was 3.6, meaning that more 4-H Educators and Coordinators rated the trainings more helpful than less helpful.

Table 39

4-H Educators and Coordinators Rating of Training

Answer	%	<i>f</i>	Mean	Standard Deviation
1-Not at all helpful	0.00%	0	-	-
2- Slightly helpful	0.00%	0	-	-
3- Somewhat helpful	40.00%	2	-	-
4-Very helpful	60.00%	3	-	-
Total	100%	5 total responses	3.6	0.49

The next question asked 4-H Educators and Coordinators what resources they used to prepare for volunteer trainings. Participants could select as many resources that they use. There was an open-ended choice for participants to write in other resources. The responses will be recorded below due to the small number of open-end responses. The majority (26.32%) of 4-H Educators and Coordinators use 4-H materials either online, books or handouts to prepare for trainings.

Table 40

Educator/Coordinator Resources Used

Answer	%	<i>f</i>
Fellow county level 4-H Extension educator/coordinator	21.05%	4
State level 4-H extension educators	15.79%	3
Workshops/conferences	21.05%	4
4-H materials (online, books, handouts)	26.32%	5
Non- 4-H materials (online, books, handouts)	10.53%	2
Other (please specify)	5.26%	1
Total	100%	19 total responses

Other- opened ended answer to question number ten-

- Annual Leader training materials are usually developed by a group of fellow county level educators with the assistance from a state specialist. The state office usually puts its blessing on it and creates 4-H materials that accompany the training.

Question number eleven asked 4-H Educators and Coordinators how often they were approached by volunteers with volunteer related questions. The majority (80%) of educators reported this frequency as 10 times or more per year.

Table 41

Frequency of 4-H Educators and Coordinators Approached with Questions

Answer	%	<i>f</i>
Not at all	0.00%	0
Once a year	0.00%	0
Between 2-5 times a year	0.00%	0
5-10 times a year	20.00%	1
10 times a year or more	80.00%	4
Total	100%	5 total responses

Question number twelve, was an opened ended question asking 4-H Educators and Coordinators what questions they are approached with by volunteers. The answers in their entirety will be in Appendix C, and a summary of the results are below

Table 42

Categories of questions 4-H Educators and Coordinators are Approached With

Answer	<i>f</i>
Conflict	4
Administration	6
10 total responses	

The last question asked 4-H Educators and Coordinators how they solved the volunteer questions. There was an open-ended choice where participants could list resources. The open-ended answers will be listed below as is a small number of answers. The majority (60%) of 4-H Educators and Coordinators listed other as the main answer.

Table 43

How 4-H Educators and Coordinators Answer Questions

Answer	%	<i>f</i>
Provide solutions by yourself	0.00%	0
Refer to other county extension educators	0.00%	0
Refer to state level extension educators	0.00%	0
Refer to 4-H resources (print, online, handouts)	40.00%	2
Refer to non-4-H resources (prints, online, handouts)	0.00%	0
Other (please specify)	60.00%	3
Total	100%	5

Open-ended other answers:

- I used a combination of resources
- Depending on the situation it may be any of all of the above
- I've used as many of these options as I can find. Sometimes I've tried to modify a non-4-H resource to fit the 4-H situation, sometimes I find a 4-H resource from a different state, I usually try to ask my liaison for his thoughts after doing some of my own research first.

Chapter V- Discussion, Recommendations, Conclusions

Discussion

This study focused on 4-H volunteer training perceptions among 4-H volunteers and 4-H Educators and Coordinators. A total of 99 current 4-H volunteers and five 4-H Educators and Coordinators participated in this study by completing online surveys regarding volunteer training.

Main research objectives were designed to address specific questions. The four objectives were:

1. How do volunteers value their prior trainings?
2. What topics do volunteers request further trainings on?
3. How do volunteers seek advice on volunteer related problems?
4. How do 4-H Educators and Coordinators support 4-H volunteers with trainings?

Two separate surveys were designed, with questions formed to meet these research objectives. Furthermore, these findings may also help statewide 4-H Educators and Coordinators by drawing conclusions based on volunteer feedback regarding volunteer training.

The survey was sent to county 4-H Educators and Coordinators in six counties in northwest Wisconsin, 4-H Educators and Coordinators were responsible for forwarding on to the volunteers in the county. Due to the method of distribution, there was no population amount and a response rate cannot be formed for the volunteer surveys. Seven 4-H Educators and

Coordinators in the same six counties were sent the 4-H Educator and Coordinator survey and were invited to complete the survey. A total of five 4-H Educators and Coordinators completed the survey for a responses rate of 71%. The low completion numbers for the volunteer survey is likely due to several reasons, such as improper communication between educators and their volunteers (e.g., county 4-H Educators and Coordinators didn't read their email or forgot to forward the survey to volunteers). It is also plausible that volunteers and 4-H Educators and Coordinators checked their emails and then simply forget about completing the survey. Due to the lack of population and response rate for volunteer survey, this creates a limitation with the results. They cannot be generalized beyond this sample. There is no way to see if this is a representation of the entire 4-H volunteer population.

The background information collected in the survey found that the majority of volunteers have served for 1-5 years. The survey also found that over half of volunteers have served in 4-H volunteer roles for less than ten years. This suggests that volunteers are involved for shorter terms of service. These numbers are in agreement with a study completed by Nippolt, Pleskac, Schwartz & Swanson (2012) that showed 65% of volunteers serving for less than 10 years. The survey found that the majority of volunteers served as project leaders, and the second highest category was club leaders. This is in agreement with the study completed in the North Central Region 4-H Volunteers (Nippolt et al., 2012) which showed a majority of the volunteers serving as club organizational leaders and project leaders.

Overwhelming, volunteers self-rated themselves having high comfort levels with the six volunteer competencies. Volunteers were 86.51% comfortable with club management, 92.14% comfortable with planning activities, 91.87% were comfortable working in youth/adult partnerships, 93.26% were comfortable working with fellow adults, and 80.91% of volunteers

were comfortable recruiting 4-H members. This can help guide future training topics based on what competencies volunteers are already comfortable with.

The majority of volunteers have attended annual leader training in the past year. It is important to note that almost 40% of volunteers reported not attending training in the prior year. This means that many volunteers miss out on gaining new knowledge and skills. The majority (75%) of volunteers reported attending training because it was required by the county they serve in. These findings can help 4-H Educators and Coordinators when planning trainings by allowing 4-H Educators and Coordinators to know their audiences, and their purpose for attending trainings.

One major objective of this study was to focus on how volunteers value the training. The majority (88%) of volunteers rated their prior trainings as beneficial with the majority of volunteers rating the training as a 3, on a 5 point scale. This data is conclusive with a study completed by Baker et al. (2000), with 62% of volunteers reported their prior training was effective. The majority of volunteers rated using the knowledge they gained at training a few times per year. This finding can be used to aid in determining the value of training topics, and can be used to also judge if volunteers find the training beneficial.

Based on the results, the training topics that volunteers desire future trainings on include leadership development, teaching skills, and 4-H knowledge. A study completed by Fox et. al. (2009) confirmed the topic of leadership development as desired by volunteers. The study also found different desired training topics. This shows that the volunteer training needs can vary and that 4-H Educators and Coordinators could poll volunteers prior to training to see what topics they desire.

Over half of volunteers prefer to receive trainings in person. This confirmed a study showing the top method preferred as group training (Fox et al., 2009). This can assist 4-H Educators and Coordinators when planning modes for delivering trainings to volunteers. In line with the Cook et al. (1986) findings that showed the majority of volunteers would attend volunteer trainings, this survey reflects that 77% of volunteers reported that they were likely to attend additional volunteer trainings.

The third objective was to determine how volunteers seek advice on issues related to their volunteer work. There was a tie in the results, with 32% of volunteers reported seeking advice between 2-5 times a year, and 32% of volunteers reported not seeking advice during the year at all. Volunteers reported having questions on administrative duties related to the 4-H program. 4-H Educators and Coordinators can use this information to plan volunteer trainings focusing on administrative tasks. When asked what resources volunteers used to answer their questions, 54% of volunteers reported seeking the advice from fellow volunteers, and 41% of volunteers reported asking 4-H Educators and Coordinators for help. This means that 4-H Educators and Coordinators should plan on helping volunteers throughout the year.

The background information gathered in the educator and coordinator survey found that there was a wide range of experience levels of 4-H Educators and Coordinators. There was no majority for number of years working in positions. This shows that 4-H Educators and Coordinators might have varying levels of experiences and time spent training and working with volunteers.

All of the 4-H Educators and Coordinators that completed the survey reported their skill level with teaching volunteer training at a 'good', 'very good', or 'excellent' level. The survey also showed that 4-H Educators and Coordinators believe that the trainings they provide are

somewhat helpful or very helpful to volunteers. These findings match the results of the volunteer survey, where over 80% of volunteers rated the trainings as beneficial. It can be assumed; the volunteers rated the trainings as beneficial in part because of 4-H Educators and Coordinators that are proficient in teaching the trainings. 4-H Educators and Coordinators reported teaching at least one volunteer training a year, with the majority teaching other trainings throughout the year. All of the 4-H Educators and Coordinators preferred to teach volunteer trainings in person versus on line. This matches the results of the volunteer survey, where three-quarters of volunteers preferred to receive training in-person.

Another objective of the study was to research how 4-H Educators and Coordinators support 4-H volunteers with trainings. The study found that the majority of 4-H Educators and Coordinators are approached by volunteers with questions ten times a year or more with questions related to administrative problems in the 4-H programs. 4-H volunteers confirmed this statement in the volunteer survey, with administrative problems being the number one question as well. When asked how 4-H Educators and Coordinators solve volunteer questions, they report using a combination of materials, including 4-H materials, non-4-H materials, and fellow 4-H educators.

Recommendations

While it may not be plausible for each county to conduct their own research on volunteer training needs, county 4-H Educators and Coordinators should ask volunteers what their needs are, and how they can be met. This could bridge the gap between the differences of training topics taught at training, and training topics desire, and help increase volunteer satisfaction rates with training. This survey could be a simple email survey, or 4-H Educators and Coordinators

could ask volunteers their training needs after the training, or when attending meetings and functions with volunteers.

Another recommendation is to increase the resources available to 4-H volunteers in order for volunteers to be able to answer and solve their volunteer related questions and problems. The majority of volunteers had questions related to administrative tasks with the 4-H program, and some of these questions could be solved with handouts or materials on simple 4-H tasks such as 4-H registrations and fair entries.

The main recommendation is for continued research on this topic. Additional research could look at the changing training needs of volunteers who have been active volunteers for many years, versus new volunteers. The research here sought to identify the perceptions of 4-H volunteers and Wisconsin 4-H Educators and Coordinators around 4-H volunteer training. Further research on this topic could provide more information and details that could benefit the Wisconsin 4-H program.

In conclusion, there are three recommendations from this study. The first is that county 4-H Educators and Coordinators ask volunteers what volunteer training they desire. The second is that resources are available to aid volunteers in solving problems and questions related to volunteer tasks. The third recommendation is that additional research is conducted.

Conclusion

Valuable responses from 99 4-H volunteers and five 4-H Educators and Coordinators were used to complete this research. In answering the four objectives of this study, several conclusions can be drawn. Volunteers overwhelmingly agreed that volunteer training was beneficial, but also agreed that they would attend additional volunteer trainings. 4-H Educators

and Coordinators also had majority response that the volunteer trainings they offer are helpful to volunteers and that they have a satisfactory skill level for teaching volunteer trainings. Both volunteers and 4-H Educators and Coordinators prefer to receive and teach volunteer trainings in person versus on-line. To aid volunteers in the future, 4-H Educators and Coordinators should develop training based on each individual county volunteer's, training desires and needs, as well as create additional training materials for volunteers. Overall, the volunteers and educators who responded provided valuable input to potentially help 4-H Educators and Coordinators plan future volunteer trainings.

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Appendix A Emails and follow ups to participants

Email to 4-H Educators and Coordinators regarding volunteer survey

Hi (4-H Educator/Coordinator name),

I am completing a Master's degree Thesis project at the University of Wisconsin River Falls. I am asking for your help and cooperation by forwarding this email to 4-H volunteers in Chippewa County. Thanks for your help!

Hi 4-H volunteers,

I am completing a Master's degree Thesis project at the University of Wisconsin River Falls. I am asking for your participation in an online survey. Results will be used to complete my thesis project. This survey is designed to research 4-H volunteer perceptions on 4-H volunteer training. It should take no more than 10 minutes to complete. Please use the link below to complete the survey. Thank you for your participation.

4-H volunteer survey link: http://uwrf.co1.qualtrics.com/jfe/form/SV_8rnOr95tcgQE1tX

Thank you,

Katie Stenroos
University of Wisconsin River Falls
Agriculture Education Graduate Student

Email sent to 4-H Educators and Coordinators regarding Educator/Coordinator Survey

Hi \${m://FirstName}

I am completing a Master's degree thesis project at the University of Wisconsin River Falls. I am researching volunteers and educators perceptions of 4-H volunteer training. You should have already received an email from me asking you to forward an email to your volunteers. Please forward that email on to your volunteers.

Now, I am asking for your opinions on 4-H volunteer training. Please complete the survey link below. It should take no more than 10 minutes. Thank you for your participation.

Follow this link to the Survey:

[\\${l://SurveyLink?d=Take%20the%20Survey}](#)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

[\\${l://SurveyURL}](#)

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:

[\\${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}](#)

Thank you,

Katie Stenroos
University of Wisconsin River Falls
Agriculture Education Graduate Student

Email reminder sent to 4-H Educators and Coordinators

Hi \${m://FirstName},

I recently invited you to participate in a 4-H volunteer training survey, which is for my Master's degree thesis project at the University of Wisconsin River Falls. You should have already received an email from me asking you to forward an email to your volunteers. If you have not already done so, please forward that email on to your volunteers.

Now, I am asking for your opinions on 4-H volunteer training. If you have not already completed the survey, please complete the survey link below. It should take no more than 10 minutes. Thank you for your participation.

Follow this link to the Survey:

[\\${l://SurveyLink?d=Take the Survey}](#)

Or copy and paste the URL below into your internet browser:

[\\${l://SurveyURL}](#)

Follow the link to opt out of future emails:

[\\${l://OptOutLink?d=Click here to unsubscribe}](#)

Thank you,

Katie Stenroos
University of Wisconsin River Falls
Graduate Student

Appendix B Surveys
4-H Volunteer Training
Volunteer Evaluation Survey

Demographics:

1. How old are you?
18-30 years old
31-40
41-50
51-60
61-70
71-80
81 or older

2. How many years have you been a 4-H volunteer?
Less than 1 year
1-5 years
6-10 years
11-20 years
21-30 years
30 years or more

3. Which of the following roles apply to you? Check all that apply
Club leader
County-wide committee member
Project leader
Club volunteer
Other (please specify) _____

Questions:

4. What is your comfort level with the following volunteer competencies? Please rate each one on the following scale
1-Poor
2-Fair
3-Good
4-Very Good
5-Excellent

Club Management
Planning activities and events
Teaching members

Working in youth-adult partnerships
 Working with fellow adults
 Recruitment of 4-H members

5. Please answer the following questions in the grid. What 4-H provided training(s) have you attended in the last year? And for each volunteer training you attended, what format was used?

What trainings have you attended in the past year?	Selected yes or no	What format was used for each training?
No trainings		N/A
Annual leader training		In person/online/other
VIP initial volunteer training		In person/online/others
Additional county provided training		In person/online/other
Other (please specify)		In person/online/other

6. If you selected other, please briefly explain what the training format was
7. Did you attend the trainings because it was required by the county?
 Yes
 No
8. Follow-up question
 If you selected no on the above question, why did you attend the training?
9. How would you rate the initial 4-H volunteer training you received?
 1-Poor
 2-Fair
 3-Good
 4-Very Good
 5-Excellent
10. How frequently do you use the knowledge you gained at volunteer training in your 4-H related work?
 Not at all
 A few times during the year
 Every couple of months (about 6 times a year)
 About once a month

11. Please rate each topic that you learned about at any volunteer training, using the following scale, based on the topics helpfulness level to your volunteer roles
N/A-topic not covered at training

- 1- Not at all helpful
- 2-Slightly helpful
- 3-Somewhat help
- 4-Very helpful

Club management
Team building skills
Leadership development
Conflict resolution
Teaching skills
Inclusion
4-H knowledge
Other (please specify)

12. How interested are you in further training on the following topics?
Please rate each topic using the following scale

- 1- Not at all interested
- 2-Slightly interested
- 3-Somewhat interested
- 4-Very interested

13. What topic would you request further training on? (select one)

Club management
Team building skills
Leadership development
Conflict resolution
Teaching skills
Inclusion
4-H knowledge
Other (please specify)

14. What training delivery mode do you prefer for volunteer trainings?

Online
In-person
Other (please specify) _____

15. How likely are to attend additional volunteer trainings?

Very unlikely
Somewhat unlikely
Slightly unlikely

Slightly likely
Somewhat likely
Very likely

16. How often to you seek advice on questions related to your volunteer work?

None
Once a year
Between 2-5 times a year
5-10 times a year
10 times or more a year

17. Follow up- If you answer that you had volunteer related questions
What were your questions related to you volunteer work?

18. What is the first resource you use when you have a question related to your volunteer work?

Fellow volunteers/leaders
4-H Extension Educator/Coordinator
4-H materials (online, books, handouts)
Non-4-H materials (online, books, handouts)
Other resources

4-H Volunteer Training

4-H Educator and Coordinator Evaluation Survey

Demographics:

1. How old are you?
 - Under 30 years old
 - 31-40
 - 41-50
 - 51-60
 - 61 and above

2. How many years have you been a 4-H Extension Educator/Coordinator?
 - Less than 1 year
 - 1-5 years
 - 6-10 years
 - 11-20 years
 - 21-30 years
 - 30 years or more

Questions:

3. How would you rate your skill level on teaching volunteer trainings to volunteers?
 - 1- Poor
 - 2- Fair
 - 3- Good
 - 4- Very Good
 - 5- Excellent

4. What 4-H provided training(s) have you taught in the prior year? (Chose all the apply)
 - Annual leader training
 - VIP initial volunteer training
 - Additional county provided training
 - Other (please specify) _____

5. How often do you teach VIP volunteer training?
 - Zero times
 - Once a year
 - Between 2-5 times a year
 - 5-10 times a year
 - 10 times or more a year

6. How often do you teach annual volunteer training?
 - Zero times
 - Once a year
 - Between 2-5 times a year
 - 5-10 times a year
 - 10 times or more a year

7. How often do you teach additional volunteer trainings?
 - Zero times
 - Once a year
 - Between 2-5 times a year
 - 5-10 times a year
 - 10 times or more a year

8. What is your preferred method of teaching trainings?
 - Online
 - In-person
 - Other (please specify) _____

9. How would you rate the 4-H volunteer trainings you provided in terms of helpfulness to the volunteers?
 - 1- Not at all helpful
 - 2- Slightly helpful
 - 3- Somewhat help
 - 4- Very helpful

10. Which of the following resources do you use to prepare for volunteer training? (Check all that apply)
 - Fellow county level 4-H Extension Educator/Coordinator
 - State level 4-H Extension Educators
 - Workshops/Conferences
 - 4-H materials (online, books, handouts)
 - Non-4-H materials (online, books, handouts)
 - Other (please specify) _____

11. How often are you approached by volunteers with volunteer related questions?
 - Not at all
 - Once a year
 - Between 2-5 times a year
 - 5-10 times a year
 - 10 times or more a year

12. What questions do volunteers approach you with related to their volunteer work? (please specify)

13. How do you help solve these volunteer questions?

Provide solutions by yourself

Refer to other county extension educators

Refer to state level extension educators

Refer to 4-H resources (print, online)

Refer to non-4-H resources (print, online)

Other (please specify) _____

,

Appendix C

Results to Open- Ended Questions

4-H Volunteer Survey

Question #3- What volunteer roles apply to you? Other selection writes in choices

- Volunteer
- help with general workshops
- Help plan a few of the monthly activities
- Adult volunteer
- booth
- parent who volunteers
- Volunteer wherever needed
- Assistant

Question #6- Follow up questions to previous question. If you selected other training format, please briefly explain what the training format was used?

- Online
- Training on a Saturday, led by [Educator] from the extension office.
- Not quite answering the question but- My 4-H training comes from my many years of being in 4-H, not because I've been a trained much as an adult now. I also went to college to be a teacher, so those skills are a part of me. The actual training as an adult, to be a leader, has only been here and there for a required initial training. This was more so that I could be cleared to volunteer with children, have a background check, etc.
- I try to learn new skills in my craft and stay current on trends by reading, having meetings with peers and using online tutorials
- [Educator] led at committee meeting
- N/A - meant No for that question and then could not uncheck Other
- Lessons in natural horsemanship through outside trainer
- VIP included in person and online, but form doesn't allow you to choose both.

Question #8- If you selected no on the above question why did you attend the training?

- There is no training available
- I have not in the last year. Please note that I am a teacher, so I am super comfortable with kids.
- no other training
- to refresh or spark energy for program
- Increase leadership skills and understanding of 4-H organization
- For personal growth and to be a better leader
- State training was required by state

- I enjoyed the same training the previous year. I did partially attend because it was required but we did already have someone from our club attending in order to meet our requirement. So my attendance was not absolutely required.
- Didn't attend any training
- Learning opportunity
- To learn more about county leadership opportunities
- Required by county and state to be up to date.
- I selected yes, but I always find them informative & great time to network
- Not a part of my role

Question #13 - What training delivery mode do you prefer for volunteer trainings? Other selection write-in answers

- Both
- Zoom
- combination of online & in-person (meetings made open to either option)
- Both online and in person, depends on topics.
- Either

Question #16 Follow up- If you answered that you had volunteer related questions, What were your questions related to your volunteer work?

- how to manage conflict, and working with youth/adult partnership
- These questions are n/a as as a county-wide leader you are only asked by extension to do or follow-up when they don't want to
- Typically related to a specific process - how to navigate something at the club or county level or history on what has been done in the past
- member re-enrollment, bylaws, fair questions
- How to find information and get everyone together
- How to fill out paperwork.
- How to help the kids
- Leadership questions at the club level
- Too many questions to answer here. I have been fortunate to co-lead with a very knowledgeable leader who has taught me a lot about 4H & the programing on all various levels (club, county, state, national)
- Online membership and programs
- What do you DO?
- 4h knowledge and clarification on events
- Fair/showing eligibility questions
- How to handle conflicts
- Logistical, who a resource person might be, if anyone is interested in my idea, etc
- Usually about rules
- Usually how to handle a particular issue that has arisen in my club

- I always have a challenging time finding out who needs my help and finding out how to contact them
- solving conflict,
- Questions were related to changing/updating bylaws, proper procedures, best practices
- They had to do with the volleyball tournament
- Typically related to process such what should the club leader do in "this situation:
- Why are some people being allowed to dictate the focus of the program for only a small number of members and not for all the kids in the program?
- Usually county-level follow-up on asking for more information about specific event
- Rules clarifications
- One child had fire but apparently didn't sign up in time for 4h
- When things are scheduled. Specifically, Volleyball tournament and Performing Arts Festival
- How to do things and what things to do
- Not sure how to get involved. Very little interaction with my club to understand hope to help
Administrative
- Some about enrollment logistics, another about a conflict within our club, another about how to make the treasury job more efficient
- Registration
- questions related to county and state events, questions about record books

4-H Educator and Coordinator Survey

Question #12-What questions do volunteers approach you with related to their volunteer work?

- How to use 4-H Online?
- How to deal with difficult behavior?
- How to handle youth who don't attend/participate in club meetings?
- Help with financial records.
- Help with charters/ SMART goals, ect.
- Many times, it is situational to working with youth or other adult volunteers and they are looking for guidance and communication assistance
- How do I help my 4-Hers with XYZ situation as it is affecting our club dynamics. Situations have included: bullying, exclusionary behaviors, lack of communication, lack of desire to participate in activities with both genders (that's a girly thing), etc.
- Questions regarding policies or behavior related questions regarding parents or youth.