LEADERSHIP SKILLS DEVELOPED THROUGH THE GEORGIA JUNIOR BEEF SHOW PROGRAM

by

EVAN KYLE CLARK

(Under the Direction of John C. Ricketts)

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to determine the life leadership skills developed through beef exhibiting in the Georgia Junior Livestock Program. This study examined the five leadership constructs working with groups, understanding self, leadership, making decisions, and communicating their relationship to exhibiting beef cattle. The study utilized a retrospective post test methodology that was conducted on a convenience sample of students at the Georgia National Fair Junior Beef Cattle Show which is one of the largest shows in Georgia that has representation from all demographic areas that show beef cattle in the state. This study indicated that four of the five leadership skills had significant gains as a result of exhibiting beef. The areas that had significant gain included understanding self, leadership, making decisions, and communicating, with leadership having the largest gain. In addition the participants were asked to complete a demographic survey that was correlated to leadership skills. This analysis yielded a significant relationship between making decisions and the demographic variables of age and farm size. The study indicates that beef exhibiting has an impact on leadership skills that are developed through beef exhibiting.

INDEX WORDS: Beef Exhibiting, Leadership Skills Inventory, Livestock Exhibiting, Youth
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by

Evan K. Clark

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Evan K. Clark

Major Professor: John C. Ricketts
Committee: Chris Morgan
Richard Hudson

Electronic Version Approved:

Maureen Grasso
Dean of the Graduate School
The University of Georgia
August 2009
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Chapter 1

Introduction

Statement of the Problem

The junior livestock program is a tool for both the 4-H and FFA within the state of Georgia to develop youth. This program includes, but is not limited to, market lambs, market goats, market hogs, breeding ewes, breeding gilts, equine, commercial dairy heifers, market steers, and breeding heifers. Furthermore, the program also includes livestock evaluation, dairy evaluation, equine evaluation, meat evaluation, poultry evaluation, and numerous opportunities in a variety of projects in FFA and 4-H. One of the largest sectors of the youth livestock program is the beef project which includes market steers and breeding heifers.

The author found little research dedicated to leadership life skills developed through showing beef cattle alone. Walker (2006) conducted one of the only known studies related to leadership development of beef exhibitors when he analyzed National Junior Angus Association members and the impact of exhibition.

To determine the impact of the beef project participants, facilitators, and adult leaders need factual information to truly gauge the overall usefulness of the program in developing future leaders for the agricultural and political world. Such knowledge could encourage other youth to participate and perhaps even spur more funding and support for youth show projects in the state of Georgia in the future.

Background and Setting

This research project was initiated by the need for an understanding of how much leadership a youth participant can develop through participation in the state junior livestock show held annually each February in Perry, GA (Silcox, 2007). This show has become the staple for
livestock show programs conducted in numerous FFA chapters and/or 4-H clubs throughout the state of Georgia (Silcox, 2007). Projects undertaken by youth are a long term commitment since the selected species to be shown arrives in the fall and will be managed by the student until the time of the state show. In Georgia, there has not been an extensive study conducted to determine if students gain leadership skills through participation in the state show. Determination of the amount of skills gained by each student can be used to support future programs, as well as provide support for increased student participation and program growth.

**Research Objectives**

This study will investigate gains in leadership skills, specifically, as it relates to their experience exhibiting beef. Of particular interest to this researcher, was the beef cattle show program. The beef cattle section of the state show consists of a breeding heifer project and a market steer project. Students who choose to show beef cattle have an option of three heifers and/or two market steers per year to develop (Silcox, 2007). Specifically, the objectives of the study were the following.

1. Describe beef exhibitor demographics and experiences.
2. Determine the leadership skills developed through the beef youth livestock program.
3. Describe experience factors and demographics contributing to leadership skill development.

**Limitations of the Study**

Evaluation of leadership development was limited to senior beef exhibitors who were in the barn at the time of data collection at the 2008 Georgia National Fair Junior Livestock Show. Senior students are those who are in the grades 9 through 12 who were participating for the 4-H or
FFA. All counties in Georgia were represented at the show, but not all counties are represented in the convenience sample. Although an attempt for purposive sampling was made, one glaring limitation is that not all counties are included in the data set.

**Basic Assumptions of the Study**

Results of this study could show an increase in the leadership skills learned throughout the project. In addition, an increase in the participation of beef exhibition by students has risen over the last decade to an all time high. Perhaps this means the program is effective. The program takes students to many locations and a variety of events throughout the state and nation. The methodology and results were designed to describe how beef exhibition itself has had an impact.

**Significance of the Study**

The study was developed to give a measurable and tangible set of data for the impact of beef exhibiting. The FFA and 4-H programs in Georgia have had a strong livestock program with a sizable amount of resources devoted to the program from many areas. The program has always been questioned on the amount of leadership that is returned for the amount of resources devoted to the livestock program. The study spotlights the multiple levels of leadership life skills that is expressed though the livestock program in Georgia. This may be a framework for future studies concerning many aspects in the livestock program. These retrospective/post results of the effectiveness of the program should provide important data to support or refute the effectiveness of the program.

**List of Terms**

- **4-H-** “is a national youth organization sponsored by the Department of Agriculture in rural areas, with programs for young people in home economics, agriculture, community service, and personal development” (Encarta, 2009).
• **Agriculture Education**- is a division of education systems that has a main objective to educate the pupil about all areas of agriculture through the classroom and laboratory, through leadership activities such as FFA, and through Supervised Agriculture Experiences.

• **Beef Exhibition**- is a project that an individual undertakes to select, manage, and exhibit a beef type animal for the purpose of slaughter or reproduction that is judged on current industry standards.

• **Experience Factors**- are the activities and experiences that influences how the leadership is developed though life.

• **FFA**- is an intra-curricular leadership organization for students of agriculture education that promotes leadership and personal growth through SAE and CDE’s.

• **Leadership Skills Inventory**- is a qualitative and quantitative instrument that evaluates the leadership skills that an individual has developed and learned.

• **Livestock Exhibition**- is a project area that an individual undertakes to select, manage, and exhibit livestock, which is an animal used for a purpose.

• **SAE**- is supervised agriculture experience where a student selects a project that involves agriculture and must complete a record book.

• **Youth**- is a term used to describe “An early period of development” (The free dictionary, 2009).

**Summary**

The purpose of this study of the Georgia Junior Beef Program was to determine if the individuals in the program had developed leadership life skills as a result of their project. A brief summary of the research was conducted in chapter one to give a large view of the research content.
which is significant to the importance of this study. Furthermore a background of the study along with key terms was provided. In addition, the limitations of this study were also highlighted.
Chapter 2

Review of the Literature

The purpose of this study was to determine the leadership skill impact of beef exhibition. Specifically, this study sought to a) describe beef exhibitor demographics and experiences; b) determine the leadership skills developed through the beef youth livestock program; and c) describe experience factors and demographics contributing to leadership skill development.

The following review of literature examined the factors that influence leadership development, especially in livestock exhibitors/exhibition. Research specifically related to the leadership impact of beef exhibition was limited. The specific areas from the literature that this study examined included the dependent variable of Leadership Skill Inventory (LSI scores), and the independent variables of demographics and beef exhibition and leadership experiences.

Theoretical Framework

The educational theory of John Dewey has guided agricultural education for the past century and it is the appropriate theory framing this study as well. Analyst, N. I. Emand (2000) divided Dewey’s theory into the following sub-theories.

Dewey’s Theory of Value proposes that an individual needs to appreciate the topic about which they are learning, but it also believes that to value something means to perform an intellectual act of comparing or judging something (Emand, 2000). Livestock exhibition is an activity that allows for both: invocation of motivation (value) in youth and the intellectual actions of evaluating the livestock which they develop.

According to Dewey’s Theory of Knowledge, knowledge is developed through “doing” (Emand, 2000, 7) Only by experiences that are natural (positive or otherwise) can
knowledge be achieved. The National FFA Organization has as its motto a picture of this sub-
theory of Dewey,

“Learning to Do, Doing to Learn, Earning to Live, Living to Serve” (National FFA Organization, 2001, p. 8)

Dewey’s theory of Human Nature believes that everything that is distinctively human is
learned. Naturally, this would include leadership skills that are developed through the experience
of beef exhibition/showing. Dewey also believed that learning was active – that learning was a
consequence of actions. To transmit and transfer learning, an individual must be part of the
experience, not a mere observer. Dewey also believed that the individual must not
experience/learn in isolation. True experiential learning is enhanced via socialization. Beef
exhibition is also a social activity, and theoretically, the leadership learning gleaned through the
activity should be enhanced (Emand, 2000).

Leadership

The concept of leadership is ever changing as research is constantly being conducted
(Cherry, 2007). Leaders play an important role in creating and sustaining a group with which
people become committed. Commitment to a group is what makes a leader effective. A truly
effective leader is one that makes decisions, develops strategic plans, is a risk taker, and a
negotiator (Carver & Enfield, 2008). The commitment to be an effective leader is what develops a
successful organization as well. Furthermore the effectiveness of a leader can be shaped by the
work experiences that they have because of the multiple types of interactions that people come in
contact with as they move from job to job or activity to activity (Kelly & Osborne, 2004).

This work experience is the basis of John Dewey’s (1902) principle of interaction in which
experience becomes an educational value that will transform to create intelligence and progress
any organization (Carver & Enfield, 2005). This educational progression can be a key component to one’s leadership development learning as well.

Conceptually, Ricketts and Rudd (2002) developed a model of youth leadership development in which all phases of leadership development were enhanced through cyclical and increasing levels of experience (See Figure 2-1). Specifically, Ricketts and Rudd (2002) determined through an extensive review of the literature that youth become more competent in leadership knowledge, motivation, decision-making, communication, and inter and intra personal relationships first through “awareness” (leadership is not yet part of the young person’s life), followed by “interaction” (a youth thinks about leadership and wants to explore), and “integration” (leadership becomes woven in to the fabric of the youth) Ricketts (2003).
Many believe that two of the most successful organizations in training or developing leaders through experience are the FFA Organization and the 4-H Club. These two youth organizations enhance leadership skills through their development of life skills (Myers & Dyer, 2005). This training to develop traits, provide experience, and learn from problem-based situations is what makes young people truly effective (Rosenbusch & Townsend, 2004). These organizations have also been the leaders in developing activities such as livestock exhibition, of which one of the primary purposes is leadership skill development.

**FFA**

The National FFA Organization is the largest youth organization in the world with over 500,000 members across the fifty states, Virgin Islands, and Puerto Rico (2008-2009 Official Manuel, 2008). The organization is constitutionally part of agriculture education classes that are taught in high schools and middle schools along with Supervised Agricultural Experiences (SAE). FFA and SAE offers the opportunity to develop leadership skills (2008-2009 Official Manuel, 2008). Moreover the FFA is driven by the FFA creed, the Mission, and Motto to as they create goals for FFA students now and in the future.

The SAE is a picture of Dewey’s theory of education. It is one of the three main foundations of formalized agricultural education. The SAE is a component of the total agriculture program (Ricketts & Rudd, 2004). SAE’s helps to promote the individual growth of the student by developing skills that are valued by employers such as leadership, team work, personal responsibility, problem solving, management, and analysis (Fraze, Smith, Kistler, & Colvin, 2004).
This development of skills makes a truly secure leader in any organization (Dormody & Seevers, 1995).

The FFA also strives to promote leadership development through service learning and community development. Service learning is a way of providing hands on experiences for students while connecting academia to the real world (Hoover & Webster, 2004). The use of service learning in the FFA is yet another way to develop life leadership skills.

The other major component in FFA is Career Development Events (CDE). A CDE is a competitive activity through which students are trained by the teacher or volunteers to test their knowledge of a subject. The immense contact with the teacher is what makes an agriculture educator such an influential part of their development (Ricketts & Rudd, 2004). As the teacher trains a student or many students for a CDE, they are learning life skills that will help them in the future. Arguably, one of the most impactful of the CDE’s is the judging contests (Dormody & Seevers, 1995). This is because the student(s) are bombarded with choices, ranking information, and other key skills. Not only are judging contests helpful but speaking contests help to nurture and blossom communication skills as well (Fraze, Smith, Kistler, & Colvin, 2004). Such key skills and leadership development is what makes an FFA member a viable citizen as well as easily employable. Interestingly, judging is a symbiotic activity with livestock exhibition. Animals that are exhibited must be judged/evaluated, and exhibitors as well as judges must know and be able to evaluate what is important.

4-H

Agricultural education has an equally useful non-formal youth organization referred to as 4-H (Georgia 4-H History, 2008). In the development of leadership skills the 4-H club has as its
objective to “develop...youth as individuals as responsible and productive citizens” (Radhakrishna, 2005,p. 86).

In addition, the 4-H significantly influences the development of young people. This development carries them into adulthood (Fox, Schroeder, & Lodl, 2003). Furthermore, the core values of 4-H that help to push this development include Agriculture, Citizenship, Communication, Environment, Family and Consumer Science, and Leadership (Livestock Rule Book, 2008). This leadership stems from its roots as a community-based organization that is governed by youth officers with the guidance of the local extension staff (Carver & Enfield, 2008). It is not the governing body of 4-H that makes it the great developer of leaders but comes from the projects and activities that contribute to leadership development (Radhakrishna, 2005). These activities and projects closely represent the pledge that drives the youth organization.

I pledge my head to clearer thinking,

my heart to greater loyalty,

my hands to larger service,

and my health to better living for my

club, my community, my country, & my world

(Georgia 4-H History, 2008, p 8).

The positive responsibility that youth learn comes from group projects, goal setting, and project planning (Garton, Kitchel, & Ball, 2005). The core values that are mentioned above coincide with the pledge and objective that help to make it a cornerstone in youth leadership life skill development (Georgia 4-H History, 2008).

Many alumni of the 4-H club have higher college retention and higher degrees (Fox, Schroeder, & Lodl, 2003). In addition the alumni also claim that the program kept them out of
trouble to help them to become more successful (Georgia 4-H History, 2008). The success that they contribute to 4-H also comes from the life skills that they learned in their education including decision making, responsibility, interpersonal skills, service, ethics and social skills (Fox, Schroeder, & Lodl, 2003).

**Leadership Life Skills**

Whether young people were active in the FFA or the 4-H, the performance of leadership functions in real life is part of the development of life skills that one must learn as a youth (Seevers & Dormody, 1985). Leadership life skills can be defined as the ability for an individual to learn skills that will help them to be successful in living (Targeting Life Skills Model, 2008). These leadership life skills descriptions are useful to understanding leadership life skills that are developed in youth activities.

Leadership life skills in youth is so important that not participating in the opportunities offered through youth organizations like 4-H and FFA is a risk behavior (Boyd, Herring, & Briers, 1992). The development of the youth is mental, physical, social, and emotional, and growth in these areas prepares them for a productive life (Targeting Life Skills Model, 2008).

As with any form of learning leadership life skills are developed through experiences of the person (Dewey, 1902). Thus skills that are determined to develop are representative of the effectiveness of learning. This study tested the effectiveness of the beef exhibition experiences/leadership learning via the Leadership Skills Inventory (LSI) that gives a measurable test of how a person has developed in the area of leadership life skills (Koch, Townsend, & Dooley, 2005).

**Beef Exhibiting**
FFA and 4-H, which promote agriculture and personal development, maintain a youth livestock show program that includes breeding beef heifers, market beef steers, commercial dairy heifers, market lambs, breeding ewes, market goats, breeding gilts, and market hogs. The show program’s mission states that it provides opportunities to develop life skills and enhance knowledge in an ethical manner (Silcox, 2007).

The beef program within the state of Georgia is one of the strongest and most well respected programs that 4-H and FFA offer. The shows and fairs in which members participate/exhibit develop life skills and leadership (Shih & Gamon, 1997). These skills that are learned come from the project itself no matter the ownership or non-ownership type of project (Wacker & Boyd, 1992). These experiences in the project expedite enormous amounts of skills, choices, and principles.

In participating in beef exhibiting students have the opportunity to learn skills about life, the project, and leadership. Throughout one’s participation he or she develops responsibility as the number of skills learned by the student increases (Rusk, Summerlot-Early, Machtmes, Talbert, & Balschweid, 2003). Other skills that are learned in this exploration of livestock exhibition include self confidence, goal setting, problem solving, people skills, decision making, and sportsmanship (Shih & Gamon, 1997). Furthermore while acquiring these skills exhibitors learn to make ethical choices that help to build character by being aware of what they must face if they make the wrong decision and follow the path of an unethical choice (Rusk, Brubaker, Balschweid, & Pajor, 2006).

In addition, the participants in the beef exhibiting program learn numerous principles to be truly successful. These principles that make the greatest impact among members are rural life along with food and fiber production (Wacker & Boyd, 1992). Life skills learned through production agriculture include record analysis, budgeting, animal healthcare, and animal evaluation
(Rusk, Summerlot-Early, Machtmes, Talbert, & Balschweid, 2003). With such a vast array of life and career building development with in such a small project that is practiced in 48 states there seems to be a need for more research to prove the true impact of beef exhibition on today’s youth whether the youth is in an urban or rural setting.

**Conclusion**

The development of leadership is a process that consumes from many sources. This consummation of knowledge, skills, and principles is the bases for the following research that will be conducted on the leadership development of beef exhibitors in Georgia. The impacted areas in this study that were previously conducted will be the basis for the further research into leadership and how it will be developed.
Chapter 3

Methodology

The population for this study consisted of senior participants in the Georgia National Junior Livestock Show. The convenience sample (n = 24) consisted of randomly selected students who were in the tie barn on the day of data collection.

Every county that exhibits beef was present at the 2008 show, but not all counties are represented in the usable sample. However, a generalized examination of the show participant database indicates that the students who volunteered to participate were determined to be representative of the sample in the major demographic categories. For this reason, the researcher assumes that the findings can be inferred and that inferential statistics are appropriate (Oliver & Hinkle, 1982). Paired sample t-tests were used to determine significant gains in LSI scores as a result of beef exhibition. However, one should exercise caution when processing the generalized results beyond the participants of the study because of the non-randomness of the sample.

This descriptive survey design study utilized a retrospective/post-test methodology to identify changes in LSI as a result of beef exhibition and to discover contributions of demographics and experiences to the changes on leadership skills. The dependent variables were the constructs of the Leadership Skills Inventory (LSI), working with groups, understanding self, communicating, making decisions, and leadership. The independent variables were beef exhibition experiences, leadership experiences and demographics. Since random assignment was not possible (students volunteered to complete the survey) the research design was descriptive survey. To determine statistical significance of LSI change and the significance of change, an alpha level of p< .05 was established a priori for all analyses. T-tests were used to calculate the significance of
the change, and Pearson’s r and t-tests, and Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) were calculated to
determine additional variable contributions to LSI change.

Data Collection

To conduct data collection, participants who had their parents present in the tie barn on the
date of data collection volunteered to fill out a questionnaire and parental consent form. Selected
subjects from the barn on that day must also have been registered cattle exhibitor for the Georgia
National Fair State Junior Livestock Show. Exhibitors had to meet the following criteria of
collection on the market steer or breeding heifer project, and then compete with one or both
species. In addition, the subjects had to be in high school within 2005-2008 competitions. Every
student who was given a questionnaire completed it in full yielding a 100% response rate for the
convenience sample.

The instrument used to assess changes in the students’ self-perception of leadership skills
was a retrospective/post version of the Leadership Skills Inventory (LSI), developed at Iowa State
University in 1980 by Carter and Townsend (1981). The original LSI contained 21 statements
describing various leadership and life skills (See Table 3-1).
Table 3-1

*Leadership Skills Inventory Internal Scales*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>Item #</th>
<th>Statement</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working With Groups</td>
<td>1.</td>
<td>I can cooperate and work in a group.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Groups</td>
<td>2.</td>
<td>I get along with people around me.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4.</td>
<td>I believe in dividing the work among group members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8.</td>
<td>I listen carefully to opinions of group members.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>12.</td>
<td>I believe that group members are responsible persons.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Self</td>
<td>3.</td>
<td>I feel responsible for my actions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5.</td>
<td>I understand myself.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>13.</td>
<td>I am sure of my abilities.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>18.</td>
<td>I feel responsible for my decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating</td>
<td>10.</td>
<td>I can lead a discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14.</td>
<td>I am a good listener.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19.</td>
<td>I can give clear directions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>20.</td>
<td>I can follow directions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making Decisions</td>
<td>7.</td>
<td>I consider all choices before making a decision.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>11.</td>
<td>I use past experiences in making decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15.</td>
<td>I use information in making decisions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>6.</td>
<td>I feel comfortable teaching others.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>9.</td>
<td>I am respected by others my age.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>10.</td>
<td>I can lead a discussion.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>19.</td>
<td>I can give clear directions.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>21.</td>
<td>I can run a meeting.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

These statements corresponded to five internal scales for analysis: working with groups, understanding self, making decisions, communicating and leadership. In the original scale, responses were measured on a five point summated rating scale from 1-strongly agree, 2-agree, 3-undecided, 4-disagree, and 5-strongly disagree. The reported reliabilities for the five scales according to Townsend (1983) ranged from .41 to .79. Specifically, the original instrument claimed the following Cronbach’s alpha reliabilities: Communicating (.74), Working with Groups (.69), Making Decisions (.69), Understanding Self (.78) and Leadership (.84) (See table 3-2).
Table 3-2.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Scale</th>
<th>N</th>
<th>Alpha</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Communicating</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>.74</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Working with Groups</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making Decisions</td>
<td>274</td>
<td>.69</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Self</td>
<td>276</td>
<td>.78</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>267</td>
<td>.84</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The instrument used in this study is different because it applied a retrospective/post-test (or some refer to it as the pre/then) methodology to the original LSI. Rohs and Langone (1997) postulated that this method would provide a less conservative and more accurate means of assessing leadership skill development than would traditional pre and post test methods. Using this approach the same LSI items were used, but the items were asked twice. The first part of the questionnaire, the retrospective portion, subjects were asked to think back to before they started showing to answer as accurately as possible how they would answer each of the summated rating scale items concerning how efficiently they could have performed the leadership skill. The post-test portion of the instrument again utilized the original items but subjects were asked to rate themselves and their leadership skills in their current state. The questionnaire can be viewed in Appendix A.

In the demographic portion of the questionnaire, participants were asked to complete additional items to obtain information about exhibition variables and demographics that may influence leadership. A set of multiple choice questions, with answers that students can circle or write in with an array of choices to represent all factors in relation to the question (see Appendix B). These questions were designed to cover the major variables identified in the literature review. Some of the variables identified included questions on the organization to which they belong, how
long they have been participating, and what leadership positions have they held within a time frame (Walker, 2006).
Chapter 4

Results

Objective 1: Demographics

Data collection included the demographics of the participants, as well as retrospective and post-test questions about the leadership skills gained by the students as a result of beef exhibition. The demographics that were measured include age, gender, hometown population, size of the student’s farm, the type of farm, the student’s classification in high school, post-high school plans, type of species shown, the beef project location, the number of CDE’s students in FFA participate in, the number of 4-H events a student participates in, the number of Leadership conferences attended, if the student is an officer of FFA or 4-H, and length of time an office was held. Results of each demographic are discussed below. At the time of data collection, 24 students registered as state as livestock showmen completed and returned the survey.

All participants surveyed were between the ages of 14 and 18 or older. Of the students who participated in this study 12 of the 24 surveyed were at the age of 17 as seen in Figure 4-1 below.

Age Distribution of Participants

Figure 4-1. Age distribution of participants.
Specifically 52% of the students were 17 at the time of completing the survey; nine percent were age 18, nine percent were age 14, 17% were age 15, and 13% were age 16 (Figure 4-2).

![Age of Students](image)

*Figure 4-2. Percentages of student participants.*

Gender of the students surveyed was also analyzed. Of the 24 students surveyed, 15 were female (62.5%) and 9 (37.5%) were male as seen in Figure 4-3.

![Gender of Participants](image)

*Figure 4-3. Gender of the students.*

The population of each student’s hometown was measured. Nine out of the 24 students (37.5%) who completed the survey were from towns that have a population size of 7,000 people to
10,000 people as seen in Figure 4-4. Almost 17% of participants lived in a town of 1000 or less people. Twenty five percent of participants lived in a town with a population from 1,000 to 3,000, one participant (4.2 %) was from a town population of 3000 to 5000, and four (16.7%) participants were unsure of the size of their town.

![Town Population of Participants](image)

*Figure 4-4. Student’s hometown population.*

Participants of the study were also questioned about the type of farm on which they live and the size of the farm. The majority of students questioned lived on primarily beef cattle farms, with a few students living on farms that also have other livestock as well. Of the 24 students only one student did not live on a beef cattle farm as seen in Figure 4-5. In addition, over 70 percent lived on a beef only farm, and 25 percent lived on a farm with beef and other animals.
As for the size of the farms that students live on, 21 percent lived on farms of 10 acres or less, most (35%) live on farms that are at least 10 acres and up to 50 acres. Just over 21 percent of participants lived on a farm of 51 to 100 and 101 to 200 acres respectively. None of the students surveyed live on farms that have more than 200 acres (Figure 4-6).

**Figure 4-5.** Farm type of students surveyed.

**Figure 4-6.** Farm size of students surveyed.
High school classification of the students was also taken as a part of the survey. Out of the 24 students questioned 11 (46%) were seniors (Figure 4-7). Three were freshmen (12.5%), two were sophomores (8.3%), six were juniors (25%), and two (8.3%) were out of high school.

![High School Classification of Participants](image)

*Figure 4-7. High school classification of participants.*

The students were also asked about their plans for after they graduate high school. Twenty of the 24 (83.3%) students plan to continue pursue their 4-year degree. Two (8.3%) students were seeking a two-year degree only and one had plans to go directly to the workforce (Figure 4-8).
The research also indicated that species shown was potentially an important variable contributing to leadership development. The possible species that students can show include beef steers, beef heifers, commercial dairy heifers, breeding gilts, market hogs, breeding ewes, market lambs, market goats, and horses. The majority of the students who completed the survey showed beef steers and heifers. The only other species shown by the students were market hogs. Of the 24 students questioned, 16 showed beef steers and 15 showed beef heifers. Six of the students surveyed show both beef steers and beef heifers. Twenty nine percent showed steer only, 33% showed heifers only, 29% showed both, 8% showed steers and hogs.
The location of the beef project was also a demographic question on the survey. Students were asked if their beef project was kept on a family farm or at some other location. Other location choices include friends’ farm, a school farm, a relative’s farm, or other. Sixteen (66.7%) out of the 24 completed surveys indicated that the student’s beef projects were kept on a family farm, three (12.5%) projects were kept at a school farm, and five projects were kept on a friend’s (20.8%) farm as seen in Figure 4-10.

Figure 4-9. Type of species shown by students.
Students were also questioned about their participation in the FFA and the 4-H. They were asked about how many CDE’s or contests that they participated in for the FFA. The majority of students that completed the survey participated in one, two, or seven or more CDE’s (Figure 4-11).
As for their participation in 4-H, the students were asked about the number of 4-H events each participated in each year. As seen in Figure 4-12, most students either participated in one event or seven or more events.

*Figure 4-12. Number of 4-H events in which students participate*

Students were also asked about the number of leadership conferences in which they participate. Ten (41.7%) out of 24 participated in three to five conferences (Figure 4-13). Five (20.8%) participated in two or less. Eight (33.3%) participated in six to eight conferences, and one participated in 12 or more leadership conferences.
This study was also interested in seeing how many of the students who participated in beef projects also were leaders in their own organizations. To measure this, students were asked if they have ever held an officer position, and if so which ones. Of the 24 questioned, 20 (83.3%) students indicated that they were officers in their school’s or county’s organization as seen in Figure 4-14.
Figure 4-14. Percentages of students who serve as officers.

Offices held by the students have included president, vice-president, secretary, treasurer, reporter, sentinel, or other. Twelve of the 24 students have held the vice-president office, with only 7 acting as president thus far, as seen in Figure 4-15.

![Offices Held by Students](image)

Figure 4-15. Offices held by students.

**Objective 2: Retrospective and Post-Test Results**

Students were questioned in the retrospective and post-test on various aspects of leadership before they began showing animals in either FFA or the 4-H and after they have been showing. Students showing beef for the Georgia National Fair agreed that they possessed competence in each of the LSI areas [Working with Groups (Retro $M = 1.5$, $SD = .50$; Post $M = 1.36$, $SD = .48$), Understanding Self (Retro $M = 1.64$, $SD = .56$; Post $M = 1.35$, $SD = .44$), Making Decisions (Retro $M = 1.81$, $SD = .74$; Post $M = 1.47$, $SD = .56$), Leadership (Retro $M = 1.83$, $SD = .66$; Post $M = 1.49$, $SD = .48$), and Communication (Retro $M = 1.75$, $SD = .57$; Post $M = 1.45$, $SD = .44$)] prior to and following their showing experience (Table 4-1).
According to Table 4-1, LSI scores were higher following beef exhibition experience for each of the constructs. This gain in LSI scores was significant at the .05 alpha level for Understanding Self ($t = 3.225; p = .004$), Leadership ($t = 3.404; p = .002$), Making Decisions ($t = 2.842, p = .009$), and Communicating ($t = 2.932; p = .007$). In fact, these significant gains in LSI scores also had effect sizes in the medium range for Understanding Self ($d = .580$), Leadership ($d = .596$), Making Decisions ($d = .523$), and Communicating ($d = .594$) according to Cohen (1977).

**Objective 3: Demographics and Experiences Contributing to LSI Scores**

Bivariate correlations were conducted for LSI construct score changes and each of the continuous variables the literature suggested may contribute to leadership development in the
context of showing livestock (age, town population, size of farm, grade in school, # of CDEs, # of 4H activities, and leadership conferences attended. The only significant correlations between LSI change and demographic or experience variables were the following. The positive change in the LSI construct Making Decisions was significantly correlated to age ($r = .47; p<.05$), meaning that as age increases, exhibitors’ ability to make decisions may increases. Conversely, Making Decisions was negatively correlated with farm size ($r = .42, p<.05$).

Table 4-2

*Demographic and Experience Contributions to Changes in Leadership Skill Development (LSI Scores) as a Result of Beef Exhibition (n = 24)*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Change</th>
<th>Age</th>
<th>Pop.</th>
<th>Farm Size</th>
<th>Grade</th>
<th># of CDEs</th>
<th># of Activities</th>
<th>4H Leadership Conf.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Working Groups</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>-.32</td>
<td>.11</td>
<td>.05</td>
<td>-.29</td>
<td>.18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Understanding Self Leadership</td>
<td>.17</td>
<td>.13</td>
<td>-.17</td>
<td>.22</td>
<td>-.28</td>
<td>-.02</td>
<td>.20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Leadership</td>
<td>.14</td>
<td>.00</td>
<td>-.34</td>
<td>.08</td>
<td>.06</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Making Decisions</td>
<td>.47*</td>
<td>-.09</td>
<td>-.42*</td>
<td>.31</td>
<td>.19</td>
<td>-.23</td>
<td>.11</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Communicating</td>
<td>.09</td>
<td>-.03</td>
<td>-.01</td>
<td>.07</td>
<td>.12</td>
<td>-.07</td>
<td>.15</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

T-tests were conducted to determine if there was a relationship between leadership change and the two nominal variables, gender and whether or not a student was an officer. In both cases, there was not relationship. Analysis of variance was calculated to determine if relationships existed between change in leadership scores and the ordinal variables, farm type, post-graduation plans, species shown, and location of the farm. In all cases no relationship was determined.
Chapter 5

Conclusions

This study was conducted to determine how effective the beef projects that are part of the FFA and 4H organizations are at developing leadership and life skills in students. Determination of effectiveness is based on the retrospective and posttest responses of each student who completed the survey. This convenience sample was surveyed during a state wide show.

All of the LSI constructs were in the “Agree” or “Strongly Agree” category after the data were analyzed meaning that the sample of students would have exhibited leadership skills before and after livestock exhibition. The constructs in the study included Working with Groups, Understanding Self, Leadership, Making Decisions, and Communicating.

The finding that exhibitor leadership scores were so high supports the study of Boleman, Cummings, and Briers (2005) who found that in over 13 life skill areas there was an influential gain in all of the areas. This study along with Boleman, et al. indicates the influential nature of beef exhibition on leadership life skill development. This data was also reinforced by the Rusk, et al. (2003) study which looked at the the impact of raising and exhibiting livestock, and which indicated that doing so would help youth gain beneficial leadership skills in their school, home, and jobs.

The increase or the development of leadership (LSI scores) from the retrospective to the posttest responses was significant in 4 of the 5 areas for Georgia beef exhibitors. The increase was a result of exhibiting beef was significant for Understanding Self, Leadership, Making Decisions, and Communicating. With such large gains in the sample that was similar to the general population in the database of youth livestock exhibitors in Georgia, these constructs of the LSI may be
indicating the importance of the youth livestock program by reaching the targets that have been set forth by agriculture teaching staff, extension staff, and leaders of each respective program.

In the findings set forth, there is a strong need for youth livestock exhibiting especially in the area of beef to promote the success of the members of each program with their leadership life skills. This was also found the case in a study by Walker (2006) conducted at The University of Georgia that analyzed the National Junior Angus Association members and the leadership skills developed by exhibiting Angus cattle. Walker found that the greater number of years that a student exhibited livestock the greater the amount of leadership skills that were developed. The congruent finding of each study of different divisions of beef exhibiting illustrates the importance of beef exhibiting and the development of leadership life skills.

The first construct that was examined but did not have a significant gain was working with groups. This may have been the case because working with groups is not a requirement in beef exhibiting. The beef exhibition project is an individual project where one must complete the project and is stated in Silcox (2007) rule book that it is a member’s project. The related LSI test questions for working with a group are all centered on key words, people, groups, and teamwork.

The second construct that was analyzed with the LSI was understanding self. The gain in this leadership life skill was significant (p<-.004). Thus this finding coincides with the finding of Walker (2006), who found that livestock project impacts how students understand one’s self with deeper meaning after a beef showing career. In addition these finding are further supported by Dormody (1995) where agriculture education students have deeper understanding of leadership life skills though activities in agriculture education, and the beef project certainly would apply to their study as well.
The third construct examined during this research study was leadership. The study examined how each exhibitor saw their leadership ability grow or decline across their career. The results from the study show the largest gain in the LSI was leadership itself. The gain in leadership was also significant (p<.002). As noted in the Rusk, et al. (2003) leadership was the largest gain when youth are raising livestock including beef projects among these findings that they discovered. Furthermore, Seevers and Dormody (1995) also found in their findings that leadership was at the top of the list for senior 4-H’ers in their study.

The fourth construct that was evaluated in the research was making decisions. This is a strong part of the beef project in Georgia. The Silcox (2007) rulebook states that these are member projects, meaning that each student must make the decisions on the project. The findings of Walker (2006) also found a gain in the life leadership skill of making decisions as a result of livestock projects among Junior Angus members.

The fifth construct that was analyzed for LSI gains as a results of exhibiting beef was communicating. This construct also showed significant gains from retro to posttest for the youth (p<.007). This finding is also in line with the Walker (2006) study on beef exhibiting using the YLLDS instrument, which also determined gains in communicating as a result of livestock projects. Furthermore the research findings conclude the same premise as the Boleman, et al. (2005) study communication was one of the 13 life skills that had an influential gain in livestock projects.

Demographics and leadership and exhibition experience variables were analyzed with LSI scores (working with groups, understanding self, leadership, making decisions, and communicating) to determine contributions to leadership development as part of the project. Continuous variables and the LSI change scores were analyzed with the Pearson’s r statistic, and only two significant
relationships were found. These relationships were with making decisions and age and farm size. Older age leads to better decision-making as a result of the project makes complete sense, but the smaller farm size relationship to decision-making gains is a perplexing finding. Perhaps smaller farm exhibitors have to make more decisions in terms of space utilization, use of resources, or selection of animals. This finding is one that should be investigated further.

Categorical and interval independent variables were analyzed with t-test and ANOVA respectively, and no relationships between LSI gain and these variables were determined. The key conclusion for objective 3, which sought to explore contributions to leadership gained is that there is much more to be learned in terms of why students develop leadership during the course of an exhibition project.

Future research should extend outside of the beef projects to all of the livestock projects and even to those students who participate in other projects beyond livestock exhibition. This may help to determine if other activities promoted leadership development. Also, by including other project participants it would give the researchers and developers of the program a better idea of which areas have the greatest impact on leadership development. In addition, a control group of non-exhibitors may also prove to be a beneficial strategy for further research.

Considerations must also be made as to how the surveys are distributed to the target students. This study intended to mail out the surveys to the current mailing address for each student that is on file, but this was not able to happen. Due to the problems with mailing the surveys were given by hand to the students at a livestock show. This was an effective manner of getting the questionnaire completed. Handing out of the surveys in person to students also had its own problems, especially since the students were busy with their projects at the time. Future studies must take this into consideration when approaching this type of questionnaire. Other
manners of distributing out questionnaire could be that it is sent to the advisors, allowing the
students to complete them when they are not distracted and can be collected and sent back at one
time.

An additional consideration for future research would be to have incorporate longitudinal
evaluation of exhibitors. Although the retrospective/posttest methodology is a proven method,
multiple data collection points over time may provide a truer representation of the effectiveness of
the program on leadership skills, and it may be helpful in identifying the missing variables
contributing to leadership gains as a result of beef exhibition.
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Appendices A

Questionnaire Packet
When doing this questionnaire, think back before you started showing animals when you answer the questions. Then circle the proper response that best fits your answer to the statement on the left.

**Pre-Test**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can Cooperate and work in a group</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I get along with people around me</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel responsible for my actions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe in dividing the work among group members</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I understand myself</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I feel comfortable teaching others</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider all choices before making a decision</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I listen carefully to opinions of group members</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am respected by others my age</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can lead a discussion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use past experiences in making decisions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that group members are responsible persons</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am sure of my abilities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am a good listener</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use information in making decisions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can give clear decisions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can follow directions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can run a meeting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Now take a break. When you answer the following questions below think about yourself right now. Circle the best answer that fits the state.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strongly Agree</th>
<th>Agree</th>
<th>Undecided</th>
<th>Disagree</th>
<th>Strongly Disagree</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I can Cooperate and work in a group</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>4</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I consider all choices before making a decision</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I listen carefully to opinions of group members</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
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<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am respected by others my age</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can lead a discussion</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I use past experiences in making decisions</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I believe that group members are responsible persons</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I am sure of my abilities</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<td>I am a good listener</td>
<td>1</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
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<tr>
<td>I use information in making decisions</td>
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<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can follow directions</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>I can run a meeting</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The purpose of this section is to find out some information about you. Please answer the following questions about yourself and your program by circling the correct answer that matches your answer.

1. How old are you?
   A. 14 or younger
   B. 15
   C. 16
   D. 17
   E. 18 or older

2. What is your Gender?
   A. Male
   B. Female

3. What is the size of your town by population?
   A. 1000 or Less
   B. 1000-3000
   C. 3000-5000
   D. 5000-7000
   E. 7000-10000
   F. Unsure

4. What type of farm do you have (circle all that apply)?
   A. Beef Cattle
   B. Dairy Cattle
   C. Sheep
   D. Swine
   E. Equine
   F. Goats
   G. Poultry
   H. Other________________________

5. What size is your farm?
   A. 10 acres or less
   B. 10-50 acres
   C. 51-100 acres
   D. 101-200 acres
   E. 201-500 acres
   F. 500-1000 acres
   G. 1000+

6. What will your classification in high school will you be Aug. 1, 2007?
   A. High School Freshman
   B. High School Sophomore
   C. High School Junior
   D. High School Senior
   E. Post High School

7. What is your post high school plans?
   A. 4-Year Degree
   B. 2-Year Degree
   C. Technical School
   D. Work
   E. Military
   F. Religious Service
   G. Marriage
H. Other_______________________
8. What type of species do you show (fill in the quaintly for this year)?
   A. Beef Steer
   B. Beef Heifer
   C. Commercial Dairy Heifer
   D. Breeding Gilt
   E. Market Hog
   F. Breeding Ewe
   G. Market Lamb
   H. Market Goat
   I. Horse

9. Where do you keep your beef project?
   A. Family Farm
   B. Friends Farm
   C. Relative Farm
   D. School Farm
   E. Other_____________

10. How many CDE’s do you participate in FFA a year?
    A. One
    B. Two
    C. Three
    D. Four
    E. Five
    F. Six
    G. Seven or More

11. How many 4-H events do you participate in a year?
    A. One
    B. Two
    C. Three
    D. Four
    E. Five
    F. Six
    G. Seven or More

12. How many Leadership conferences have you attended (summer camp, conferences, WLC, etc.)?
    A. Two or Less
    B. Three-Five
    C. Six-Eight
    D. Nine-Eleven
    E. Twelve or More

13. Where you an officer in 4-H or FFA?
    A. Yes
    B. No

14. If Yes, What offices and how many years? Level?
    A. President
    B. Vice-President
    C. Secretary
    D. Treasurer
    E. Reporter
    F. Sentinel
    G. Other
    H. Other

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Appendices B

Consent Form
PARENTAL PERMISSION FORM

I agree to allow my child, _____________________, to take part in a research study titled, “Development of leadership in youth livestock exhibitors in Georgia”, which is being conducted by Mr. Evan Clark, from the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education, and Communication (ALEC) at the University of Georgia (706-542-8646) under the direction of Dr. John C. Ricketts in ALEC (706-542-8646). I do not have to allow my child to be in this study if I do not want to. My child can refuse to participate or stop taking part at any time without giving any reason, and without penalty or loss of benefits to which she/he is otherwise entitled. I can ask to have the information related to my child returned to me, removed from the research records, or destroyed.

• The reason for the study is to find out if livestock exhibition (projects) are beneficial to the leadership development of youth.

• There are no risks or direct benefits for my child. However, the researcher also hopes to learn something that may help justify livestock projects for future exhibitors.

• If I allow my child to take part, my child will be asked to complete two pages of questions related to leadership development and their participation in livestock projects. The researcher will ask my child complete the consent form and the surveys and to return them in the self-addressed, stamped envelope to Dr. John C. Ricketts, 110 Four Towers, Athens, GA 30602.

• The research is not expected to cause any harm or discomfort. My child can quit at any time.

• Any individually-identifiable information collected about my child will be held confidential unless otherwise required by law. My child’s identity will be coded, and all data will be kept in a secured location.

• The researcher will answer any questions about the research, now or during the course of the project, and can be reached by telephone at: 706-542-8646. I may also contact the professor supervising the research, Dr. John C. Ricketts, ALEC, at same number.

I understand the study procedures described above. My questions have been answered to my satisfaction, and I agree to allow my child to take part in this study. I have been given a copy of this form to keep.

_________________________________________  __________________________  ____________
Name of Researcher  Signature  Date

Telephone: ____________________________
Email: __________________________________

_________________________________________  __________________________  ____________
Name of Parent or Guardian  Signature  Date

Please sign both copies, keep one and return one to the researcher.

Additional questions or problems regarding your child’s rights as a research participant should be addressed to The Chairperson, Institutional Review Board, University of Georgia, 612 Boyd Graduate Studies Research Center, Athens, Georgia 30602-7411; Telephone (706) 542-3199; E-Mail Address IRB@uga.edu