

PERSONAL BENEFITS OF 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING
AS PERCEIVED BY STATE PUBLIC SPEAKING
WINNERS IN OKLAHOMA FROM
1953 THROUGH 1993

By

DEBORAH L. SHARP

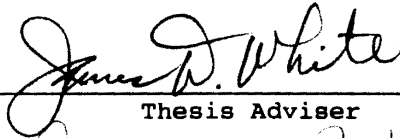
Bachelor of Science
Southeastern Oklahoma State University
Durant, Oklahoma
1977

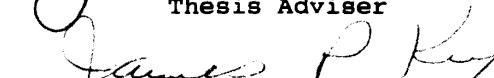
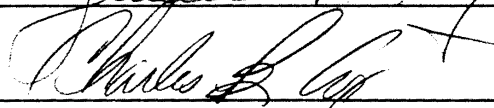
Bachelor of Science
Southeastern Oklahoma State University
Durant, Oklahoma
1979

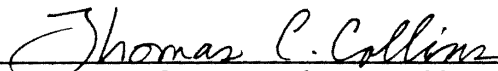
Submitted to the Faculty of the
Graduate College of the
Oklahoma State University
in partial fulfillment of
the requirements for
the Degree of
MASTER OF SCIENCE
December, 1994

PERSONAL BENEFITS OF 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING
AS PERCEIVED BY STATE PUBLIC SPEAKING
WINNERS IN OKLAHOMA FROM
1953 THROUGH 1993

Thesis Approved:


Thesis Adviser


Dean of the Graduate College

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Words are difficult to find to express my deepest gratitude to the many people involved in helping me complete this study.

The experience of obtaining this degree has been filled with joy, excitement, frustration, and perseverance, but perhaps most of all filled with a sense of accomplishment within my deepest self that I could, and did, accomplish a major goal in my life and career.

Although many people have supported and assisted me along the way, perhaps none have had such an impact as that of my adviser, Dr. James White. He encouraged, gave of his valuable time, and believed in me as a student, all gifts I will always treasure. His knowledge, wisdom, and sharing of patience have now prepared me to share knowledge and encouragement in the future with others I will meet who are on the journey to obtaining a higher education. To Dr. James Key and Dr. Bill Weeks, thank you for your time and suggestions regarding this study. You are greatly appreciated.

To my beautiful family I say thank you from the bottom of my heart. Thank you for the sacrifice of family time and money that allowed me the opportunity to pursue the goal of a higher education.

A special thank you goes to my husband, Ron, who encouraged, believed in me, and gave me that extra push I needed to continue this study.

I would like to acknowledge my Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service co-workers, Jan Montgomery, Dr. Sue Buck, Nancy Dunlap, Roger Moore, and Val Terry who contributed to my confidence and ability to complete study. Greatest gratitude is also extended to Dr. Charles Cox who continually offered support and advice.

Finally a hearty thank you to the former Oklahoma 4-H Public Speaking winners who took the time and energy to respond to the study questionnaire, without you this study would never have completed.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Chapter	Page
I. INTRODUCTION	1
Statement of the Problem.	2
The Purpose of the Study.	3
Objectives of the Study	3
Scope of the Study.	4
Definitions	4
II. REVIEW OF LITERATURE	6
Introduction	6
The History of Speech	6
4-H Public Speaking	9
Personal Benefits Gained from 4-H Public Speaking .	13
4-H Influence in Career Selection	13
Leadership Skills Through the 4-H Program	15
Summary	17
III. DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY	19
Introduction.	19
Objectives of the Study	19
Institutional Review Board (IRB).	20
Population.	20
Development of the Instrument	21
Data Collection	24
Analysis of the Data.	24
IV. PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS	26
Introduction.	26
Demographic Characteristics	26
Distribution of Factors Influencing Career Choice .	37
Distribution of Factors Influencing Community	
Involvement	40
Open Response Items	45
V. SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS	46
Summary	46
Introduction	46
Purpose of the Study	46
Objectives	46

Chapter	Page
Design and Conduct of the Study.	47
Major Findings of the Study.	49
Personal Benefits Derived from 4-H Public Speaking Experiences.	52
Factors Influencing Career Choice	55
4-H Public Speaking Winners Perceptions of Factors Influencing Community Involvement	56
Conclusions	61
Recommendations	62
Recommendations for Additional Research	63
BIBLIOGRAPHY.	65
APPENDIXES.	66
APPENDIX A - INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL FORM. .	67
APPENDIX B - COVER LETTER, FOLLOW-UP LETTERS AND QUESTIONNAIRE	69
APPENDIX C - SELECTED COMMENTS	80

LIST OF TABLES

Table	Page
I. Numerical Values and Real Limits Associated with Levels of Benefits and Influence.	25
II. A Distribution of State 4-H Public Speaking Winners by Age.	27
III. A Distribution of State 4-H Public Speaking Winners by Gender	29
IV. A Distribution of State 4-H Public Speaking Winners by Ethnic Group	29
V. A Distribution of State 4-H Public Speaking Winners by Number of Years in the 4-H Program	30
VI. A Distribution of State 4-H Public Speaking Winners by Grade Classification When Attending National 4-H Congress	30
VII. A Distribution of State 4-H Public Speaking Winners by Educational Characteristics.	32
VIII. Distribution of Academic Majors and Areas of Study for State 4-H Public Speaking Winners Upon Entering College/University After High School Graduation . . .	32
IX. Distribution of State 4-H Public Speaking Winners by Type of Community Organization and Involvement	33
X. A Summary of State 4-H Public Speaking Winners' Perceptions Concerning Levels of Personal Benefit by Selected Characteristics Associated with Life Skills.	35
XI. A Summary of State 4-H Public Speaking Winners' Perceptions Concerning Levels of Influence on Career Choice by Selected Characteristics.	38
XII. A Summary of State 4-H Public Speaking Winners' Perceptions Concerning the Level of Influence on Their Community Involvement by Selected Characteristics	42

Table		Page
XIII.	A Summary of Demographics Concerning State 4-H Public Speaking Winners by Selected Characteristics .	50
XIV.	A Summary of 4-H Public Speaking Winners Perceptions of Personal Benefits Derived from 4-H Public Speaking Experience by Selected Factors	53
XV.	A Summary of 4-H Public Speaking Winners' Perceptions Concerning Factors Influencing Their Career Choice. .	57
XVI.	A Summary of 4-H Public Speaking Winners' Perception of Benefits Derived from Public Speaking that Influenced Their Leadership by Selected Factors of Influence	60

FIGURE

Figure	Page
1. Location of Study Participants in the U.S..	22

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

Many 4-H members in Oklahoma have stated their public speaking experience with knees shaking, clutching a few index cards in one hand, while holding the podium tightly with the other. Looking across the crowded room the young person catches the eye of their 4-H leader. She smiles her encouragement.

Inhaling deeply, the young person stands as their name is called. Finally it is their turn to walk to the front of the room and deliver the speech they have worked so hard to perfect. Tomorrow the competition will be a thing of the past. In a few days the audience won't even remember the content of the speeches. Yet, this experience will have a lasting impact on this young man or young lady.

The Oklahoma 4-H program offers an opportunity for young people nine to nineteen years of age to learn the basics of public speaking. Demonstrations, speeches, one-to-one conversations regarding project work, the use of radio and television appearances, and numerous public speaking opportunities have allowed youth an opportunity to practice public speaking skills, developing self-confidence while doing so.

Since the Oklahoma 4-H program has long recognized the potential value of public speaking, objectives have been developed.

Objectives for 4-H public speaking are listed in the Oklahoma 4-H Awards Handbook and are as follows:

- * Develop research skills by attaining pertinent information about a given topic;
- * Learn to organize materials to be presented in a speech;
- * Develop a pleasing personal appearance for an audience;
- * Learn to speak convincingly in public;
- * Practice leadership skills and roles, take part in community affairs, and demonstrate citizenship responsibility;
- * Explore career, job, and productive leisure opportunities;
- * Develop skills, knowledge, and attitudes for lifelong use;
- * Learn to use accepted practices for mental, physical, and emotional health, and to respect self and others (p. 38).

Statement of the Problem

Little research has been conducted on the 4-H public speaking program in Oklahoma yet a need exists to know more regarding 4-H youth and the public speaking experience.

In today's "crunched" economy the Oklahoma 4-H program has often been called upon to justify or defend why an existing 4-H project or program should be allowed to continue. 4-H agents are often asked to explain or verify that a certain project has merit and benefits and to establish why a financial contributor, volunteer, or decision maker should continue to support such a program. The 4-H program frequently receives questions such as this concerning the merit of a particular program area.

However, one problem that existed was that there was very little, if any, direct research that had been conducted regarding the 4-H public speaking program in Oklahoma.

There was a need to gather and organize information directly related to the 4-H public speaking program in Oklahoma in order that the project might be evaluated for improvements, corrections, or adjustments, and to assist the project in measuring up to its objectives.

The Purpose of the Study

The purpose of this study was to describe selected benefits derived from the 4-H public speaking program as perceived by state public speaking winners in Oklahoma from 1953 to 1993.

Objectives of the Study

In order to accomplish the purpose of the study, the research was directed toward the following objectives:

1. To determine selected demographic information relative to the individuals who were state 4-H public speaking winners for the years 1953 through 1993.
2. To describe the selected personal benefits derived from participation in public speaking activities.
3. To describe state 4-H public speaking winners' perceptions concerning the influence of the 4-H public speaking experience on their career choice.

4. To describe perceptions of state winners as influenced by their experiences/participation in the 4-H public speaking program regarding their involvement as community leaders.

Scope of the Study

The scope of this study included the state 4-H public speaking winners in Oklahoma from 1953 through 1993.

Definitions

4-H: A youth development program which utilizes a variety of program methods and areas of interest (known as projects) to reach and teach all youth nine to 19 years of age regardless of race, color, national origin, residence or membership in any other organization.

4-H Member: Youth, aged nine to 19 years of age, that participated in 4-H club.

4-H Club: An established and recognized group which meets on a regular basis. A 4-H club consists of boys and girls between the ages of nine and 19 years of age and who have completed an official 4-H enrollment card available through a Cooperative Extension Service Office. Clubs may meet at any time during the 4-H year which begins October 1 and ends on September 30.

Cooperative Extension Service: The organization established in each state by the Smith-Lever Act of 1914 to disseminate Agricultural and Home Economics research based information from land-grant colleges and universities to the citizens of each state

Extension is the direct link between the U.S. Department of Agriculture, the land-grant universities of each state and local county governments.

Life Skills: Our abilities that are useful for living everyday life. They include thinking, doing, and feeling skills.

Public Speaking: Systematic, practical communication which aims, through the language of speech and gesture, to add to the information and knowledge of listeners or to influence their attitudes and conduct.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

INTRODUCTION

Since the beginning of 4-H Club work in the early 1900's 4-H has focused on building positive self-esteem for young members and has offered them the opportunity to learn basic communication and speaking skills to prepare for the future.

The purpose of this chapter is to review previously written literature pertaining to the 4-H program and its public speaking project. The Review of Literature for this study is divided into five sections and a summary. The areas included: (1) The History of Speech, (2) 4-H Public Speaking; (3) Personal Benefits obtained from 4-H Public Speaking; (4) 4-H Influence on Career Selection; (5) Leadership Skills through the 4-H Program; and (6) Summary.

The History of Speech

Since the early beginnings, about 450 B.C., when a scholar and teacher called Corax wrote the first book on rhetoric, each generation of man has studied the principles of public speaking. Americans have been no different. Our modern society has become very complicated. We use technologies such as computer, video and audio. We can send written messages across the country in a matter

of seconds and at the touch of a fingertip. We turn on television and hear instant messages sent from across the world as events unfold before our eyes. Like no other time in history, these changes and our complex economic and political lives, have demanded the best in oral communication.

According to Doll (1927) it is important to understand public speaking.

Primarily the function of speech is to convey thought or intelligence by word of mouth. Public speaking on a larger scale connotes the transmission of thoughts to groups through the medium of speech. The purpose of speech is not merely to talk but to convey the thought so that the audience will understand clearly (p. 9).

Doll goes on to state:

Thought, without the ability to express it, is lost to the world. Many men who have been authors of mighty plans in a time of great moments have failed to make their contributions to the world because they could not express their thoughts. Public speaking gives us the power of self expression (p. 10).

Also associated with public speaking is something known by our society as values. According to Bryant and Wallace (1953)

Our modern society has values associated with public speaking. Some are personal, some are social, some are self-evident, because they are linked to such motives as self-improvement, personal success, and confidence. Others are connected with such values as social responsibility and the welfare of others (p. 5).

Most people who engage in public speaking have often mentioned the desire to improve their self-confidence in speaking, something of personal value to them as individuals. They wanted to feel they could speak with confidence and with ease with others. These people recognize that confidence was built through knowledge and experience (p. 6).

Following self-confidence in speaking most students of public speaking have wanted to develop the ability to speak clearly, fluently and with some degree of persuasion so that an audience or person will accept their ideas and arguments. Bryant and Wallace (1953) stated, "The belief that skill in oral communication is an asset in business, professional, and public life is well founded" (p. 7).

A look inside the professional circles of the last two decades has revealed the importance of good speaking skills. Those who practice law, the clergy, military officers, politicians, radio and television professionals, teachers and all levels of corporate management have focused on communication ability.

The importance of the ability to communicate and speak have had a direct impact upon the welfare of our society and democracy.

Bryant and Wallace (1953) state:

Democracy has been defined as a way of social life in which the responsibility and power reside and are shared by people within the structure. To share responsibility and power is to believe that all men understand the methods and goals of the government and have taken part in the process.

A democratic society has made two assumptions, first, the society will not work unless there is general communication among men, and second that communication is wide spread and free. The importance of personal and social values directly tied with a person's ability to speak and convey thoughts has been directly linked with a strong society and with a strong and confident people (pp. 15-16).

What is the value of public speaking and its contribution to the speaker as an individual? According to Doll (1927):

The ability to speak is recognized as one of the primary requisites of leadership. In an age of organizations and conventions it is well-nigh impossible to lead large bodies of men and women without the assistance of successful speech. The experience of our present day activity verifies such a statement. There is scarcely a single outstanding leader in any large field of American life, past or present, who is not a convincing speaker. For a man or woman who aspires to leadership, the study of public speaking should occupy a paramount place in the training process (pp. 9-10).

People who speak effectively are likely to become the leaders of a group. Those who let others do the talking seem likely to be the followers. Training in effective public speaking is an essential part of training for leadership in any field of activity.

The principles of understanding basic communications and expression, social values, and personal values related to the power of public speaking have had a major place in our society for thousands of years and have been transmitted down through the centuries for man to use.

4-H Public Speaking

The 4-H program recognizes the importance of the knowledge and skill of communication.

Since the beginning of the 4-H concept in the early 1900's one of the primary objectives of the program has been the informal education of boys and girls regarding a variety of subjects and topics.

According to the writings of 4-H history by Wessel and Wessel (1982)

At the turn of the century American farmers were making more money than ever before and were slowly moving out of rural isolation. The horseless carriage was replacing the horse and buggy, telephones and delivered mail could be found across the rural country side. Times were changing and so was man. Rural America began to dream of a better life than the one of hard work. Comparing themselves to city folks they too wanted better clothes, plumbing, better diets for their children and home decorations to improve their environments (p. 10).

Children in one-room school houses learned very little about plants, animals, or domestic science. Parents felt the schools were preparing their children for lives in the city not that of the farm. People were becoming very concerned with the future of rural America. Two men did something about this problem almost at the same time. They were both school superintendents, one in Ohio and one in Illinois.

They both began to sponsor corn growing contests for boys. These groups soon became known as "school agricultural clubs." They studied scripts, the profession of farming and new methods of growing and producing. They elected officers, met on a regular basis and soon clubs were growing as word of the clubs began to drift across the land.

Girl's clubs were soon organized to can tomatoes and learn to sew. These groups grew in such popularity that before long clubs could be found in several states and membership grew into the thousands.

Along with the growing of crops and canning of tomatoes came an opportunity to learn something different, communication or speaking.

Members taught others through such practices as demonstrations and speeches.

In Wessel and Wessel's (1982) writings of the history of 4-H they stated:

Activities also provided a vehicle for club members to improve public speaking and organizational skills. Health activities for example benefited not only the individual club members who learned good health habits but also trained them to spread that knowledge to the general community (p. 82).

The 4-H "learning by doing" example became popular in the earlier days of club work. The philosophy behind this idea was that practice and actual "hands on" training would be a way for young people to learn. This "learning by doing" method also brought with it the opportunity for more projects. The 1900's 4-H program has continued to approach "learning by doing" while emphasizing public speaking skills along with the project.

The 4-H program prides itself in offering young people an opportunity to develop skills for adulthood, "skills in working with others, understanding self, communicating, making decisions, and leadership through the use of 4-H projects.

But do projects and speaking make a difference in the lives of 4-H members? In a study conducted by Craig for an Oklahoma State University Master of Science degree he discovered that 4-H does make a difference. Craig (1961) wrote: "in leadership areas studied, a higher percent of students with 4-H Club experience held leadership positions more often than students without club experience" (p. 25).

In another study conducted by McCully (1958) he found that:

Promotional and project talk contests were considered to be of educational value by 47 percent of the parents reporting. Demonstration contests were also considered of superior educational value by 45 percent of the parents responding. Both of these public activities give members experience and is a major concern of parents, who themselves, express difficulty in appearing before a group (p. 51).

In a special study conducted by Ladewig and Thomas (1987) the question was asked "which youth organization activities were most valuable in the development of life skills?" The study gave the answer:

The most useful experiences for both 4-H alumni and other participants came from contact with other people in the organization. The largest contribution to personal development was learning to work with others and develop a sense of responsibility (p. 3).

When we look at 4-H in the 1990's we see a large part of the program focusing on demonstrations and talks regarding projects. A closer look at a 4-H publication written by Schaefer (1985) revealed the statement that,

Speech is the most effective means of communication between human beings. The 4-H public speaking program is designed basically to communicate ideas and thoughts from one 4-H'er to another or to many. Consequently, the most effective speech is the one that presents most clearly and impressively what the speaker has in mind. It is therefore, a learning experience for the audience. But even more important, perhaps, it helps the speaker formulate into words and actions what he believes, helps him think on his feet, and gives him confidence through the experience in effectively reaching his audience (p. 1).

Personal Benefits Gained from 4-H Public Speaking

Speaking out, presenting new ideas in memorable ways, exploring new topics to teach others and organizing speech for maximum interest are all important aspects of training for 4-H youth for the public speaking experience.

In Oklahoma, approximately 2,820 members are enrolled in 4-H Public Speaking as a project. Another estimated 12,000 will at some point speak or demonstrate a project or idea for others. Public speaking activities play a major role in building confidence, increasing self-esteem and in developing communication skills in people.

In the writings of Griffith (1987)

Learning public speaking skills is an important component of a young person's education. Young people develop poise and confidence as they grow accustomed to standing before a crowd and sharing their thoughts. Learning to communicate effectively helps young people to think clearly and quickly. The process of developing a speech can improve a youngster's organizational skills and ability to research a particular subject (p. 22).

Public speaking competitions are beneficial to youngsters because they offer an opportunity to stimulate the desire to create and grow.

4-H Influence in Career Selection

The 4-H program serves as an enhancement tool for career development. According to Matulis, Hedges, Barrick and Smith

(1988), there are three approaches to encouraging occupational development.

1. The blending of career education with existing projects.
2. Distinct career development/employment training projects.
3. Career oriented activities such as career fairs, seminars and camps (p. 18).

Although there are many success stories relating 4-H and success in career choices, few studies concerning the 4-H impact on career development have been conducted.

In an Ohio study (1984) Matulis, Hedges, Barrich and Smith surveyed former members about the impact of 4-H on three general areas of their career development; self-awareness; career awareness; exploration and selection; and work competency development. The major findings and conclusions are as follows;

1. 4-H Impact on Self-Awareness - Alumni felt that 4-H had a great deal of impact on their self-awareness as defined as the recognition of their interests and abilities. This perception particularly applied to positive interests and abilities.

2. 4-H Impact on Career Awareness, Exploration, and Selection - Alumni perceived 4-H as having some impact in these areas. The greatest impact was attributed to 4-H in general career awareness concerning recognition of interests and abilities leading to a career, knowledge of career exploration resources, career considerations, and sense of need to make a career choice. Less impact was ascribed in more specific areas, such as discovering career obstacles and acquiring career information.

3. 4-H Impact on Work Competency Development - 4-H had a real impact on the development of general work competencies such as responsibility, getting along with people, following directions, and cooperation.

However in this study 4-H had little impact on the development of specific work competencies such as job interviewing, applying for jobs, and preparing resumes (p. 18-19).

Leadership Skills Through the 4-H Program

To live happy and contributing lives in our society, people need to be able to help themselves, and often others, to achieve their goals. The skills we all need to take responsibility for personal action and to work with other people in achieving goals are embodied in what we call leadership skills.

In 4-H clubs, 4-H members can learn and practice leadership in a comfortable environment. The program is designed to give young people an opportunity to experience and practice basic skills with guidance from 4-H leaders and parents then move on to more complex activities when the basic skills has been mastered.

Through continued opportunities to practice leadership skills 4-H members have a chance to apply these skills for personal problem solving as well as by helping other members reach their personal and club goals.

Does participation in 4-H projects and programs help develop leadership ability? Yes, says Meyers in a 1978 study. He stated, "participation in task-related competence training programs, such as

4-H projects are designed to be, significantly increases leadership ability" (p. 44).

The development of skills through experiential learning is the cornerstone of 4-H youth programming. As Ladewig and Thomas (1987, p. 53) discovered, "Skills and attitudes formed during youth carry over into adulthood."

In a study of the Texas 4-H program a comparison of the leadership life skills of 4-H Club members was made with youth who had never participated in 4-H. The results according to Boyd, Herring and Briers (p. 16-17) were:

Leadership Life Skill Development: 4-H Club members perceptions of their development of leadership life skills were significantly higher than the perceptions of non 4-H youth for working with groups, understanding self, communication, and making decisions and lower on the leadership scale. In contrast the non-4-H sample perceived their skill development as higher on the scales of understanding self and working with groups and lower on the remaining scales.

Effect of Level of Participation: A second question in the study was the relationship of 4-H participation to the development of leadership life skills. The strongest relationships between participation and leadership life skills existed for the scales on leadership, communicating, and working with groups.

Specific activities identified as having a positive relationship to leadership life skill development included serving as an officer, committee chair/member, serving on 4-H council,

participating in method demonstrations/illustrated talks, public speaking and judging activities.

Summary

This review of literature presented information from five key areas related to the objectives of the study. Areas of emphasis were: (1) The History of Speech, (2) 4-H Public Speaking; (3) Personal Benefits obtained from 4-H Public Speaking; (4) 4-H Influence on Career Selection; and (5) Leadership Skills through the 4-H Program.

The 4-H program offers young people an opportunity to practice and compete in the arena of public speaking, to be exposed to various careers, and to learn leadership skills to prepare the member for adulthood.

By taking part in 4-H Public Speaking competitive events each member has the opportunity to broaden his experience in public speaking. They have the opportunity to prepare and know their topic, to learn and understand, and to deliver and experience the art of Public Speaking and communicating.

The Public Speaking experience may also offer the 4-H member an opportunity to become involved with adults of various professions as well as professional settings. They also have the opportunity through the preparation and public speaking research to investigate various career information, therefore exposing them to new options. The general 4-H program will afford the 4-H member the opportunity to explore career information.

The total 4-H program, coupled with the public speaking experience, will allow the 4-H member an opportunity to develop leadership life skills. They will be able to learn about themselves and others, learning first to work individually with people then mastering the skills of working with and giving guidance to groups of people.

Finally, development of various leadership skills can help young people feel good about themselves and help them make difficult decisions about their own lives while they are still young.

CHAPTER III

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to describe the methods and procedures used in conducting this research study. In order to collect data which would provide information relating to the purpose and objectives of this study, the survey population was determined, located, and a questionnaire instrument was developed for data collection. The data collection procedure was established and methods to analysis the data were selected.

Objectives of the Study

In order to accomplish the purpose of the study, the research was directed toward the following objectives:

1. To determine select demographic information relative to the individuals who were state 4-H public speaking winners for the years 1953 through 1993.
2. To describe the selected personal benefits derived from participation in public speaking activities.
3. To describe state 4-H public speaking winners perceptions concerning the influence of the 4-H public speaking experience on their career choice.

4. To describe if the 4-H public speaking program has influenced state winners involvement as community leaders.

Institutional Review Board (IRB)

Federal regulations and Oklahoma State University policy require review and approval of all research studies that involve human subjects before investigators may initiate a research effort. The Oklahoma State University Research Services and the Internal Review Board (IRB) conduct this review to protect the rights and welfare of human subjects involved in biomedical and behavioral research. Within the parameters of the aforementioned policy, this study was thoroughly examined and permission was granted to proceed. The project number assigned by the IRB was AG-94-030. A copy of the approval form is located in Appendix A.

Population

The population for this study was comprised of 58 identified Oklahoma 4-H public speaker winners from 1953 through 1993. Identification of state winners was accomplished by the following methods:

1. The records of the Oklahoma 4-H Foundation were researched to identify former State Public Speaker winners.
2. The records of the National 4-H Archives, Washington D.C. were researched to identify former Oklahoma 4-H Public Speaking State winners.

3. A public notice of the search to locate former Oklahoma 4-H Public Speaking State winners, 1953-1993 was placed in two rural newsletters sent across Oklahoma through the Rural Electric Cooperatives and the Oklahoma Farmers Union.

4. Cooperative Extension Agents in all Oklahoma counties were asked to check their records to identify former county 4-H members who were Oklahoma 4-H Public Speaking State winners, 1953-1993.

It should also be noted that during the early years involved in this study that in some years two winners were named while in other years only one winner per year would have received the honor.

Of the 58 identified Oklahoma 4-H Public Speaking winners six were unable to be located geographically and one former winner was deceased, leaving a total population to survey of 51 former state 4-H Public Speaking Winners (See Figure 1).

Development of the Instrument

It was determined that a questionnaire to be distributed via mail would provide the highest response rate as well as provide accurate and usable information.

The type of instrument created for the study was a descriptive and opinion questionnaire comprised of the following information.

The opening of the questionnaire was used to solicit personal and general demographic information.

PART I - Personal Benefits gained through the 4-H public speaking project.

PART II - Factors influencing career choice.

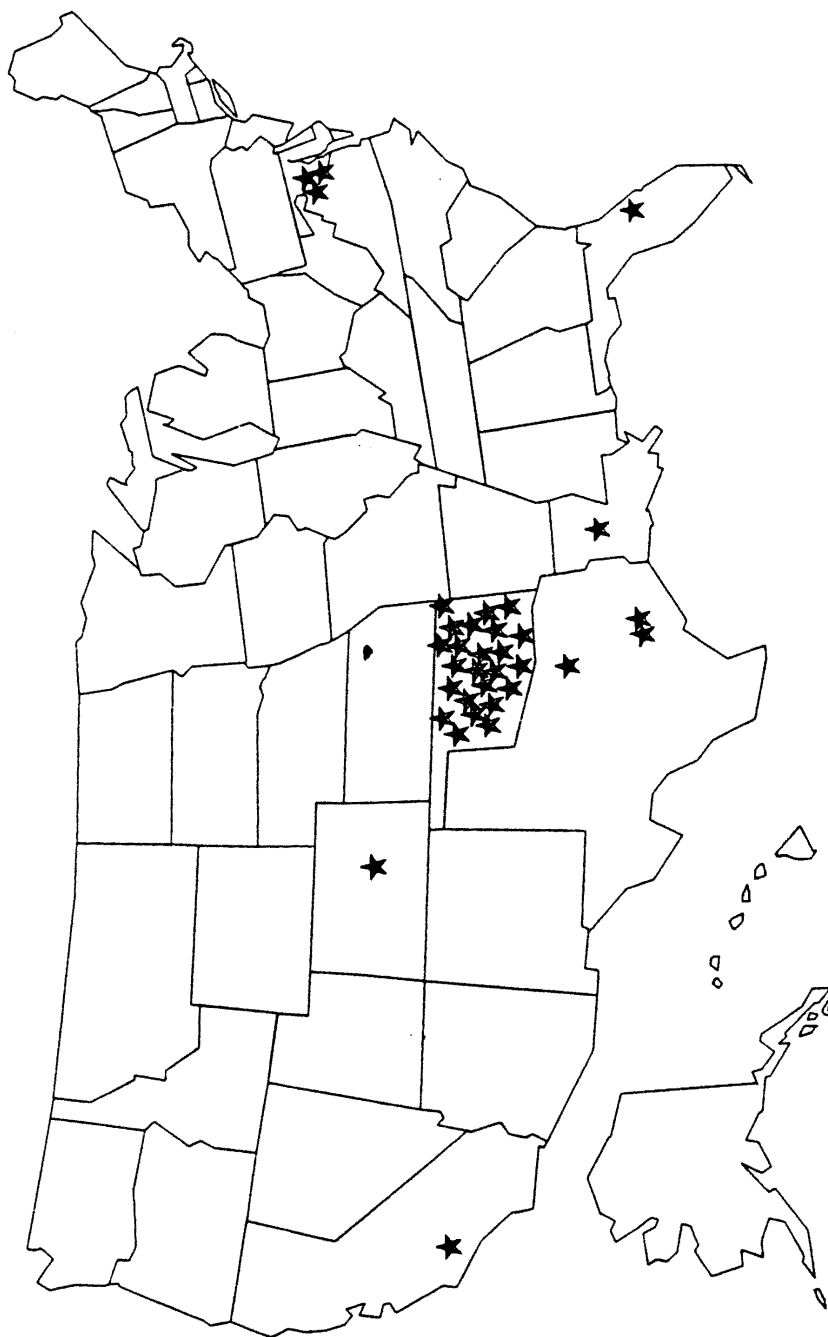


Figure 1. Location of Study Participants in the U.S.

PART III - Impact of 4-H public speaking experiences on involvement as a community leader.

The instrument was designed to be self-administered by the respondents.

For Part I, Part II, and Part III, the respondents were asked to rate a series of items related to personal benefits, leadership, experiences and career choice based on a Likert-type scale. Space was provided at the end of the survey for respondents to write any additional comments they had about their involvement with the 4-H organization since their experience of being named a state 4-H public speaker winner.

Before the questionnaire was utilized to collect data from former state 4-H public speaker winners, it was submitted for review by a committee of 15 people comprised of Oklahoma Cooperative Extension Service staff and non extension related adults. These persons were asked to evaluate and critique the draft of the instrument for content validity and to make comments and suggestions on any part of the questionnaire that they felt was inappropriate or could be improved. Seven from the original group of 15 review committee provided ideas, input, suggestions and direction to develop the survey instrument.

Endorsement and admonition were received from the State 4-H staff to conduct the study. After appropriate revisions, the questionnaires were printed, coded and prepared for distribution via mail.

Data Collection

The initial mailing on June 14, 1994 consisted of a cover letter dated June 6, 1994, the survey instrument "booklet" (See Appendix B) and a stamped return envelope with an affixed mailing label addressed to the researcher for returning of the questionnaire. Two follow-up letters to non-respondents were mailed on July 12, 1994 and August 1, 1994, respectively. A total of 38 surveys were returned with 34 having usable responses and 3 being returned after the data had been computer analyzed, however the comments from the last three questionnaires to be returned were included in the Selected Respondent Comments (Appendix C).

Analysis of the Data

Since this was a descriptive study to assess the perceived benefits of the 4-H Public Speaking by former state public speaking winners, the data were described by utilizing frequency distributions, percentages and mean scores. This analysis was appropriate since values were used to describe characteristics, information and data concerning the participants' perceptions. Responses to the items were assigned numerical values to assist in reporting the data. To permit an accurate description and analysis of the data, numerical values and real limits were established for each of the items in Sections II, III, and IV of the survey instrument. Table I describes the numerical values as follows.

TABLE I
 NUMERICAL VALUES AND REAL LIMITS ASSOCIATED WITH LEVELS
 OF BENEFITS AND INFLUENCE

Numerical Value	Range of Real Limits	Level of Benefit	Level of Influence
0	0- .49	No Benefit	No Influence
1	.50-1.49	Little Benefit	Little Influence (benefit)
2	1.50-2.49	Moderately Beneficial	Moderately Influential
3	2.50-3.49	Beneficial	Influential
4	3.50-4.00	Very Beneficial	Very Influential

CHAPTER IV

PRESENTATION AND ANALYSIS OF FINDINGS

Introduction

The major purpose of this chapter is to present, describe and analyze the perceived benefits of former 4-H state public speaking winners in Oklahoma 1953 through 1993.

A questionnaire was sent to the identified population of 51 former 4-H state public speaking winners. Useable responses were received from a total of 34 public speaking winners. Their inputs are presented in four sections of this chapter including; Demographic Characteristics, Personal Benefits Derived from 4-H Public Speaking Experiences, Factors Influencing Career Choice, and Community Involvement.

Demographic Characteristics

Tables II through IX were developed to report selected demographic information. As shown in Table II, two of the state public speaking winners were 20 years of age or under (5.9%) while seven respondents were 21 to 30 years of age (20.6%). The largest group of respondents was in the 31 to 40 years of age group and included nine respondents (26.5%). Eight respondents were 41 to 50 years of age (23.5%) and tied with eight respondents who were 51 to 60 years of age (23.5%).

TABLE II

A DISTRIBUTION OF STATE 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING WINNERS BY AGE

Age Categories	Frequency Distribution	
	n	%
20 and under	2	5.9
21 - 30	7	20.6
31 - 40	9	26.5
41 - 50	8	23.5
51 - 60	8	23.5
61 and over	0	0.00
Total	34	100.00

Table III was developed to illustrate a distribution of gender for former state 4-H public speaking winners. As shown, 20 (58.8%) of the respondents were female, while 14 (41.2%) were male.

Table IV contains data as to the ethnic groups to which the respondents identified. The table reflects that 33 (97.1%) of the respondents, were white while one (2.9%) respondent was Native American.

Table V is presented to show the number of years each public speaking winner was enrolled in the 4-H Public Speaking program. The smallest group of respondents, two (5.9%) participated in the program for four to six years while 13 (38.2%) of the respondents were involved for seven to nine years. The largest number of respondents, 19 (55.9%) were involved for 10 to 12 years in the 4-H Program.

Another demographic descriptor, the grade or class of which the former public speaking winner was a member when attending National 4-H Congress was determined. The results of this effort are reported in Table VI. As can be determined by inspecting data in this table the grade/class which encompassed the largest number of responses was the same for high school seniors, eight (26.7%) respondents, as for college freshmen, eight (26.7%) responses. The second largest group to respond stated they were high school juniors, six (20.0%) respondents. The table also reflects five (16.7) high school sophomores at the time of attending National 4-H Congress and three (10.0%) high school freshmen.

TABLE III
A DISTRIBUTION OF STATE 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING
WINNERS BY GENDER

Gender	Frequency Distribution	
	n	%
Male	14	41.2
Female	20	58.5
Total	34	100.00

TABLE IV
A DISTRIBUTION OF STATE 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING WINNERS
BY ETHNIC GROUP

Ethnic Group	Frequency Distribution	
	n	%
Caucasian	33	97.1
Native American	1	2.9
Total	34	100.00

TABLE V

A DISTRIBUTION OF STATE 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING WINNERS
BY NUMBER OF YEARS IN THE 4-H PROGRAM

Years in 4-H	Frequency Distribution	
	n	%
4 to 6 years	2	5.9
7 to 9 years	13	38.2
10 to 12 years	19	55.9
Total	34	100.00

TABLE VI

A DISTRIBUTION OF STATE 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING WINNERS
BY GRADE CLASSIFICATION WHEN ATTENDING
NATIONAL 4-H CONGRESS

Classification	Frequency Distribution	
	n	%
9th - Freshman	3	10.0
10th - Sophomore	5	16.6
11th - Junior	6	20.0
12th - Senior	8	26.7
College Freshman	8	26.7
Total	30	100.00

Distribution of the highest level of educational attainment by state 4-H public speaking winners is presented in Table VII. This data reveals a group of six respondents received some college education while eight (23.5%) received a baccalaureate degree from a four year college or University. The largest number of respondents, 20 (58.8%) received a Masters degree or higher.

Table VIII was designed to present data regarding in which educational area(s) state 4-H public speaking winners majored while attending university or college. The major with the most responses was Business/Accounting with 12 (35.3%) responses. The table reveals the majors next chosen by former state public speaking winners were Education, five (14.7%) responses and Home Economics, five respondents (14.7%). Other majors selected were Speech Communication and Journalism with four (5.9%) respondents; Agricultural related majors, specifically Animal Science and Horticulture, two (5.9%) respondents; Zoology, one (2.9%) respondent; Liberal Arts, one (2.9%) respondent; Educational Administration, one (2.9%) respondent; and Microbiology, one (2.9%) respondent.

Table IX is presented to describe current involvement of respondents in community organizations/activities. Responses to church-related activities were 23 (67.6%) yes respondents and 11 (32.4%) no respondents. When state 4-H public speaking winners were asked about their involvement in community organizations 18 (52.9%) respondents stated yes, they were involved, while 16 (47.1%) respondents, stated no, they were not involved in community organizations. Twenty (58.8%) respondents said they were involved

TABLE VII

A DISTRIBUTION OF STATE 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING WINNERS
BY EDUCATIONAL CHARACTERISTICS

Highest Grade Level Completed	Frequency Distribution	
	n	%
Some College/University Training	6	17.6
Baccalaureate Degree	8	23.5
Graduate Level Training	20	58.8
Total	34	100.00

TABLE VIII

DISTRIBUTION OF ACADEMIC MAJORS AND AREAS OF STUDY FOR
STATE 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING WINNERS UPON ENTERING
COLLEGE/UNIVERSITY AFTER HIGH SCHOOL GRADUATION

Academic Area or Major	Frequency Distribution	
	n	%
Speech, Communications, Journalism	4	11.8
Home Economics	5	14.7
Zoology	1	2.9
Liberal Arts	1	2.9
Business; Accounting	12	35.4
Educational Administration	1	2.9
Microbiology	1	2.9
Education	5	14.7
Political Science	2	5.9
Agricultural Related Majors	2	5.9
Total	34	100.00

TABLE IX
DISTRIBUTION OF STATE 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING WINNERS BY
TYPE OF COMMUNITY ORGANIZATION AND INVOLVEMENT

Types of Organization/ Activity Involvement	Frequency Distribution				Total	
	<u>YES</u>		<u>NO</u>		n	%
	n	%	n	%		
Church Related	23	67.6	11	32.4	34	100.0
Community Organization	18	59.9	16	47.1	34	100.0
Volunteer Organization	20	58.8	14	41.2	34	100.0
Other Involvement*	19	55.9	15	44.1	34	100.0
Not Involved	5	14.7	33	85.3	34	100.0

*Other organizations listed included:

Bar Association, Farm Bureau, Oklahoma Cattlemen's Association, Political organizations, local, state, county, and national level, work with prison inmates, children's theater, youth sports, college alumni association, coon hunters club, National Education Association, community outreach program, Muscular Dystrophy Association, university organizations, 4-H leader, Beta Sigma Phi, 4-H Foundation, Scouts, Sierra Club, various professional organizations.

in volunteer organizations while 14 (41.2%) stated they were not involved in volunteer organizations. Nineteen (55.9%) of the respondents stated they were involved in other community organizations/activities not listed in the questionnaire while 15 (44.1%) of the respondents stated they had no other involvement in organizations or activities.

Five (14.7%) respondents to the questionnaire stated they were not involved in their community in any way while 29 (85.3%) of the respondents were involved in their community organization/activities in some way.

Frequency Distribution of State 4-H Public Speaking Winners
Personal Benefits Derived from 4-H Public Speaking Experiences.
Data in Table X were derived from a series of 24 items designed to assess the respondents perception of personal benefits derived from 4-H public speaking experiences. State 4-H public speaking winners were asked to review a selected list of factors and to select a response ranging from "No Benefit" to a response of "Very Beneficial", regarding personal benefits derived from 4-H public speaking. Among the two most often identified benefits derived from public speaking were "developing leadership abilities" and "learning public speaking skills," which were identified by 28 (85.8%) and 27 (84.4%) respondents respectively.

TABLE X

A SUMMARY OF STATE 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING WINNERS' PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING LEVELS OF
PERSONAL BENEFIT BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS ASSOCIATED WITH LIFE SKILLS

Selected Characteristic	(0) No Benefit		(1) Little Benefit		(2) Moderately Beneficial		(3) Beneficial		(4) Very Beneficial		Total		Mean	SD
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Assuming Responsibility	0	0.0	0	0.0	1	3.0	9	27.3	23	69.7	33	100.0	3.66	.54
Communicating Effectively	0	0.0	1	3.0	2	6.1	4	12.1	26	78.8	33	100.0	3.55	.74
Competing Fairly with Others	1	3.0	0	0.0	5	15.2	8	24.2	17	51.6	33	100.0	3.33	.96
Competing with Own Record	1	3.0	1	3.0	6	18.2	8	24.2	17	51.6	33	100.0	3.18	1.04
Developing Job Skills	0	0.0	2	6.1	1	3.0	9	27.3	21	63.6	33	100.0	3.34	.83
Developing Leadership Abilities	0	0.0	1	3.0	0	0.0	4	12.1	28	84.9	33	100.0	3.78	.60
Gaining Self-Esteem	0	0.0	2	6.6	1	3.0	8	24.2	22	66.7	33	100.0	3.51	.83
Establishing Peer Relations	0	0.0	1	3.0	5	15.2	11	33.3	16	48.5	33	100.0	3.27	.84
Improving Self Confidence	0	0.0	1	3.0	1	3.0	7	21.2	24	72.8	33	100.0	3.64	.70
Learning Public Speaking Skills	0	0.0	1	3.0	2	6.3	2	6.3	27	84.4	32	100.0	3.71	.73
Meeting People	0	0.0	2	6.3	3	9.3	9	28.1	18	56.3	32	100.0	3.34	.90
Participating in Meaningful Act.	0	0.0	2	6.1	7	21.1	5	15.2	19	57.5	33	100.0	3.24	1.00
Planning a Career	2	6.7	1	3.3	5	16.7	8	26.7	14	46.6	30	100.0	3.03	1.19
Setting Goals	1	3.0	3	9.1	2	6.1	11	33.3	16	48.5	33	100.0	3.15	1.09
Projecting a Positive Image	0	0.0	2	6.1	3	9.1	7	21.2	21	63.6	33	100.0	3.42	.90

TABLE X (Continued)

Selected Chatacteristic	(0)		(1)		(2)		(3)		(4)		Total		Mean	SD
	No Benefit		Little Benefit		Moderatly Beneficial		Beneficial		Very Beneficial					
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Preparing for Community Roles	0	0.0	2	6.1	8	24.2	5	15.2	18	54.5	33	100.0	3.18	1.01
Preparing for Occupational Roles	0	0.0	2	6.1	5	15.2	7	21.1	19	57.5	33	100.0	3.30	.95
Working Cooperatively with Peers	0	0.0	2	6.1	7	21.2	10	30.3	14	42.4	33	100.0	3.09	.95
Working Cooperatively with Adults	0	0.0	2	6.1	6	18.2	10	30.3	15	45.5	33	100.0	3.15	.94
Being of Service to Others	1	3.0	1	3.0	4	12.1	9	27.3	18	54.5	33	100.0	3.27	.08
Developing Ideas	0	0.0	2	6.1	4	12.1	7	21.2	20	60.6	33	100.0	3.36	.93
Making Decisions	0	0.0	1	3.0	6	18.3	8	24.2	15	45.5	33	100.0	3.30	.88
Managing Time Wisely	0	0.0	3	9.1	7	21.2	8	24.2	15	45.5	33	100.0	3.07	1.03

Distribution of Factors Influencing Career Choice

Part II of the survey questionnaire asked for responses to factors Influencing career choice. Respondents were asked to rate a series of ten factors on a "Likert-Type" scale using the following choices: "No Influence", "Little Benefit", "Moderately Influential", "Influential", "Very Influential". Table XI reveals the responses to the factors as follows: Personal contact with others in a particular career field, one (3.1%) respondent no influence, six (18.8%) little influence, eight (25.0%) moderate influence, seven (21.9%) influential and ten (31.3%) very influential. Factor two asked for a response to the influence of research skills involved in developing speech topics. Respondents revealed that four (12.5%) felt it had no influence, six (18.8%) little influence, nine (28.1%) moderate influence, six (18.8%) influential and seven (21.9%) very influential. When asked about travel opportunities associated with public speaking activities two (6.3%) responded to no influence, three (9.4%) little influence, seven (21.9%) moderate influence, eight (25.0%) influential and 12 (37.5%) very influential. Factor four, Organizational skills involved in developing public speaking topics revealed two (6.3%) respondents felt it had no influence, two (6.3%) little influence, six (18.8%) moderate influence, 11 (34.4%) influential and 11 (34.4%) responded very influential. Delivery skills involved in public speaking participation received responses of one (3.1%) no influence, two (6.3%) little influence, three (9.4%) moderate influence, 12 (37.5%) influential and 14 (43.8%)

TABLE XI
A SUMMARY OF STATE 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING WINNERS' PERCEPTIONS CONCERNING
LEVELS OF INFLUENCE ON CAREER CHOICE BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Selected Characteristic	(0) No Influence		(1) Little Benefit		(2) Moderately Influential		(3) Influential		(4) Very Influential		Total		Mean	SD
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Personal contact with others in career field	1	3.1	6	18.8	8	25.0	7	21.9	10	31.3	32	100.0	2.60	1.21
Research skills involved in developing speech topics	4	12.5	6	18.8	9	28.1	6	18.8	7	21.9	32	100.0	2.18	1.33
Travel opportunities associated with public speaking activities	2	6.3	3	9.3	7	21.9	8	25.0	12	37.5	32	100.0	2.78	1.24
Organizational skills involved in developing topics	2	6.3	2	6.3	6	18.8	11	34.3	11	34.3	32	100.0	2.84	1.17
Delivery skills involved in public speaking participation	1	3.1	2	6.3	3	9.3	12	37.5	14	43.8	32	100.0	2.47	1.21
Competition involved in public speaking activities influenced my career choice	3	9.4	3	9.4	9	28.1	10	31.2	7	21.9	32	100.0	2.47	1.21
Status and prestige of being a state winner	7	21.9	6	18.8	4	12.5	5	15.6	10	31.2	32	100.0	2.16	1.59

TABLE XI (Continued)

Selected Characteristic	(0) No Influence		(1) Little Benefit		(2) Moderate Influence		(3) Influential		(4) Very Influential		Total		Mean	SD
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Adults associated with 4-H public speaking activities influenced by career	5	15.6	4	12.5	4	12.5	7	21.9	12	37.5	32	100.0	2.53	1.50
Practice and repetition in developing public speaking	1	3.1	2	6.2	10	31.3	8	25.0	11	34.4	32	100.0	2.81	1.10
Enhanced my awareness, knowledge, understanding to retain information concerning topics/ subject matter area	1	3.1	4	12.5	4	12.5	11	34.4	12	37.5	2	100.0	2.90	1.14

very influential. Responses to the factor competition involved in public speaking activities influenced my career choice; included, three (9.4%) no influence, three (9.4%) little influence, nine (28.1%) moderate influence, ten (31.3%) influential and seven (21.9%) very influential. The status and prestige of being a state winner received seven (21.9%) to no influence, six (18.8%) little influence, four (12.5%), moderate influence, five (15.6%) influential and ten (31.3%) very influential. The responses to factor eight, adults (leaders, judges, agents, sponsors, etc.) associated with 4-H public speaking activities influenced my career received responses from five respondents (15.6%) as having no influence; four (12.5%) little influence, four (12.5%) moderate influence, seven (21.9%) influential and 12 (37.5%) very influential. Practice and repetition in public speaking had one (3.1%) respondent stating no influence, two (6.3%) little influence, ten (31.3%) moderate influence, eight (25.0%) influential and 11 (34.4%) as very influential. The final factor for consideration in Part II was enhanced my awareness, knowledge, understanding and ability to retain formation concerning particular topics/subject matter areas received one (3.1%) response for no influence, four (2.5%) little influence, four (12.5%) moderate influence, 11 (34.4%) influential and 12 (37.5%) very influential.

Distribution of Factors Influencing

Community Involvement

In order to determine if 4-H Public Speaking had an influence

on community involvement state public speaking winners were asked to respond to twelve factors presented on a "Likert-Type" scale.

Table XII reveals the responses of state 4-H public speaking winners regarding these factors.

Responses of four (11.8%) of no influence, four (11.8%) little influence, seven (20.6%) moderate influence, 12 (35.3%) influential, and seven (20.6%) very influential, were received regarding the desire to use public speaking skills. Factor two, opportunity to use public speaking skills received the responses of three (8.8%) no influence, four (11.8%) little influence, seven (20.6%) moderate influence, 13 (38.2%) influential and seven (20.6%) very influential. When asked if contact with other community leaders was a factor for community involvement a response of 12 (35.3%) was received as influential, ten (29.4%) as very influential, while ten (20.4%) felt it was moderately influential and two (5.9%) felt it to be a factor of no benefit. Responses of two (5.9%) no influence, two (5.9%) little influence, four (11.8%) moderate influence, 13 (38.2%) influential and 13 (38.2%) very influential were the responses received regarding the factor of the desire instilled by 4-H to share with others. Respondents were asked if the self-confidence developed from public speaking had any influence on community involvement. Responses received showed that 20 (58.8%) felt the factor to be very influential, one (2.9%) moderate influence, one (2.9%) little influence, and one (2.9%) no influence were the other responses. Factor six, opportunity to lead others, received the following responses, 14 (41.2%) very influential, eight (23.5%) influential, eight (23.5%) moderate influence, three (8.8%)

TABLE XII

A SUMMARY OF STATE 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING WINNERS' PERCEPTIONS
CONCERNING THE LEVEL OF INFLUENCE ON THEIR COMMUNITY
INVOLVEMENT BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Selected Characteristic	(0) No Influence		(1) Little Benefit		(2) Moderately Influential		(3) Influential		(4) Very Influential		Total		Mean	SD
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Desire to use public speaking skills	4	11.8	4	11.8	7	20.6	12	35.2	7	20.6	34	100.0	2.41	1.28
Opportunity to use public speaking skills	3	8.8	4	11.8	7	20.6	13	38.2	7	20.6	34	100.0	2.50	1.28
Contact with other community leaders	0	0.0	2	5.9	10	29.4	12	35.3	10	29.4	34	100.0	2.88	0.91
The desire instilled by 4-H to share with others	2	5.9	2	5.9	4	11.8	13	38.2	13	38.20	34	100.0	2.98	1.14
Self confidence developed from public speaking	1	2.9	1	2.9	1	2.9	11	32.4	20	58.9	34	100.0	3.41	0.92
Opportunity to lead others	1	2.9	3	8.8	8	23.5	8	23.5	14	41.3	34	100.0	1.68	1.38
Notoriety received from participating in public speaking activities	7	20.6	12	35.3	6	17.6	3	8.8	6	17.6	34	100.0	3.18	1.05

TABLE XII (Continued)

Selected Characteristic	(0) No Influence		(1) Little Benefit		(2) Moderately Influential		(3) Influential		(4) Very Influential		Total		Mean	SD
	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%	n	%		
Public speaking helped me in preparing leadership skills	1	2.9	2	5.9	1	2.9	10	29.4	20	50.8	34	100.0	3.35	1.01
Public speaking prepared me to participate in and conduct organizational meetings	1	2.9	2	5.9	1	2.9	11	32.4	19	55.9	34	100.0	3.32	1.00
4-H public speaking influenced my decision to become a leader	1	2.9	2	5.9	3	8.9	8	23.5	20	58.8	34	100.0	3.30	1.06
4-H public speaking helped me in setting goals relative to community involvement	1	2.9	2	5.9	7	20.6	9	26.5	15	44.1	34	100.0	3.03	1.09

little influence and one (2.9%) no influence. When asked if notoriety received from participating in 4-H public speaking had an influence on community involvement respondents answered 12 (35.3%) having little influence, seven (20.6%) no influence, six (17.6%) moderate influence (17.6%) very influential and three (8.8%) influential. Factor eight, 4-H public speaking prepared me for assuming leadership roles received 17 responses (50.0%) as very influential, followed by ten (29.4%) influential, four (11.8%) moderate influence, two (5.9%) little influence and one (2.9%) as no influence. One of the factors receiving the highest responses was found in factor nine, 4-H public speaking helped me in developing leadership skills. Here 20 (58.8%) responded with very influential, ten (29.4%) influential, two (5.9%) little influence, one (2.9%) moderate influence, and one (2.9%) no influence. Nineteen (55.9%) responded with very influential, 11 (32.4%) influential, two (5.9%) little influence, one (2.9%) moderate influence and one (2.9%) no influence were the responses when state 4-H public speaking winners were asked if 4-H public speaking prepared them to participate in and conduct organizational meetings. Factor eleven, 4-H public speaking influenced my decision to become a leader received 20 (58.8%) responses for very influential, eight (23.5%) influential, three (8.8%) moderate influence, two (5.9%) little influence and one (2.9%) no influence. The final responses were in regard to the factor asking if 4-H public speaking helped in setting goals relative to community involvement. With 34 (67.0%) responding 15

(44.1%) responded very influential, nine (26.5%) influential, seven (20.6%) stated moderate influence, two (5.9%) little influence and one (2.9%) no influence.

Open Response Items

The final item listed in the questionnaire was an open-response statement asking for any additional comments the public speaking winner might have regarding experiences in the 4-H public speaking program.

A listing of 15 respondent's comments can be found in Appendix C.

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Summary

Introduction

The purpose of this chapter was to present a summary of the purpose, objectives, the study problem, design and conduct of the study and the major findings. Also presented were the conclusions and recommendations which were based upon analysis and summarization of data collected and upon observations and impressions resulting from the design and conduct of the study.

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to describe selected benefits of the 4-H public speaking program as perceived by state public speaking winners in Oklahoma from 1953 through 1993.

Objectives

To accomplish the purpose of this study the following objectives were established;

1. To determine selected demographic information relative to the individuals who were state 4-H public speaking winners in Oklahoma for the years 1953 through 1993.

2. To describe the selected personal benefits derived from participation in public speaking activities.

3. To describe state 4-H public speaking winners perceptions concerning the influence of their 4-H Public speaking experience on career choice.

4. To determine if the 4-H public speaking winners perceived that their involvement in the public speaking program has influenced their involvement as community leaders.

Scope

The scope of this study included the state 4-H public speaking winners in Oklahoma from 1953 through 1993.

Design and Conduct of the Study

In order to accomplish the specific objectives, a five part questionnaire was designed and mailed to 51 identified former 4-H state public speaking winners.

Part I of the instrument consisted of 8 questions designed to obtain demographic information concerning 51 former 4-H state public speaking winners.

Personal benefits derived from 4-H public speaking experiences were addressed in part II of the survey by a series of 24 factors requiring the public speaking winners to rate each selected factor they felt was beneficial as a result of their 4-H public speaking experience. A five point "Likert-type" scale was used to denote

categories of perceived benefits with "0" being of "no benefit" and "4" being "very beneficial".

Part III of the questionnaire focused on the factors influencing career choice. In this portion, respondents were asked to respond to a "Likert-type" scale using five choices; 0) no influence; 1) little influence; 2) moderately influential; 3) influential; and 4) very influential.

Part IV contained 12 factors designed to elicit former 4-H public speaking winners responses concerning their community involvement. Each of the 12 factors asked for a response on a five-point "Likert-type" scale to denote categories of influence.

Part V, included two open-response items seeking information in two areas; 1) current involvement in the 4-H public speaking program and 2) any additional comments the former speakers might have concerning their 4-H public speaking experience.

The questionnaire was mailed to 51 former 4-H public speaking winners on June 6, 1994. After two additional follow-up mailings, 34 useable responses were received for a total response rate of 67 percent.

Once it was determined that an adequate number of responses had been received, the responses were entered on the IBM PC computer by the researcher and the data were delivered to the Oklahoma State University Computer Center for analysis. Since the entire population of former 4-H state public speaking winners 1953 through 1993 were surveyed, only descriptive statistics were necessary to accomplish the objectives of the study. Therefore, treatments applied to the

data were those designed to calculate standard deviations, means, frequency distributions and percentages. Chapter IV presents the results and findings of the data.

Major Findings of the Study

Demographic Information. Table XIII is a summary of demographic information. Thirty-four (67.0%) responded to the study. The majority of the respondents, 20 (58.8%), were female, while 14 respondents (41.2%) were male. The age ranges varied with two (5.9%) being under 20 years of age; seven (20.6%) respondents were in the range of 21 to 30 years of age; nine (26.5%) respondents were in the 31 to 40 years of age; while eight (23.5%) respondents were in the age interval of 41 to 50 years of age; and eight (23.5%) respondents were in the age range of 51 to 60 years of age. The ethnicity of the state 4-H public speaking winners was 33 (97.1%) Caucasian and one (2.9%) Native American. The study revealed that the majority (19.55%) of state public speaking winners had been enrolled in the 4-H program from 10 to 12 years when they won the state speech contest. However, 13 (38.2%) respondents had been involved in the program for seven to nine years, while two (5.9%) former members had only been involved in the program for four to six years. Furthermore, an equal number of state winners were high school students (8) and freshmen (8) when they attended the National 4-H Club Congress in Chicago. The highest level of education for former 4-H public speaking winners was past the Baccalaureate level with 20 (58.5%) respondents stating they had obtained or had worked toward a masters or higher

TABLE XIII

A SUMMARY OF DEMOGRAPHICS CONCERNING STATE 4-H PUBLIC
SPEAKING WINNERS BY SELECTED CHARACTERISTICS

Characteristic	N=34	Percent (%)
Age		
20 and under	2	5.9
21 - 30	7	20.6
31 - 40	9	26.5
41 - 50	8	23.5
51 - 60	8	23.5
61 and over	0	0.0
Gender		
Female	20	41.2
Male	14	58.8
Ethnic Group		
Native American	1	2.9
White	33	97.1
Number of Years Enrolled in 4-H Club		
4 - 6	2	5.9
7 - 9	13	38.2
10 - 12	19	55.9
Class When Attending National 4-H Congress		
9th - Freshman	3	10.0
10th - Sophomore	5	16.7
11th - Junior	6	20.0
12th - Senior	8	26.7
College Freshman	8	26.7

TABLE XIII (Continued)

Characteristic	N=34	Percent (%)
Highest Level of Formal Education		
Some College	6	17.6
Baccalaureate Degree	8	23.5
M.S. degree or Higher	20	58.8
Educational Major While Attending College		
Speech Communication: Journalism; Speech	4	11.8
Home Economics	5	14.7
Zoology	1	2.9
Liberal Arts	1	2.9
Business; Accounting	12	35.3
Microbiology	1	2.9
Education	5	14.7
Political Science	2	5.9
Agriculture Fields:		
Animal Science; Horticulture	2	5.9
Current Involvement in Community Organizations and/or Activities		
Church Related:		
Yes	23	67.6
No	11	32.4
Community Organizations		
Yes	18	52.9
No	16	47.;
Volunteer Organizations		
Yes	20	58.8
No	14	41.2
Other Involvement		
Yes	19	55.9
No	15	44.1
Not Involved		
Yes (Stated No Involvement)	5	14.7
No (No Response)	29	85.3

degree. The college major attracting the most former state winners was Business and Accounting with 12 (35.3%), while the next most popular majors among state public speaking winners were Education and Home Economics; both with five (14.7%) responses major each. Other areas of study distributed among the remaining 11 state public speaking winners were: Speech Communications, Journalism, Speech, Political Science, Animal Science and Horticulture, Microbiology, Educational Administration, Liberal Arts, and Zoology. Current involvement in community organizations/activities revealed that a majority (23, 67.6%) of state 4-H public speaking winners were involved in community church related activities, while 18 (52.9%) were active in community organizations, 20 (58.8%) involved in volunteer organizations, and 19 (55.9%) responded to other involvement. Only five (14.7%) of the 34 respondents were not in community organizations/activities.

Personal Benefits Derived from 4-H Public Speaking Experiences

Table XIV contains a summary of the findings of the study with regard to respondents' perceptions of personal benefits derived from 4-H Public speaking experiences.

A series of 24 selected factors was used to describe the state public speaking winner's perception of personal benefits.

Of the 24 items, the majority of public speaking winners selected developing leadership abilities, 28 responses (84.8%), learning public speaking skills, 27 responses (84.4) and

TABLE XIV

A SUMMARY OF 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING WINNERS PERCEPTIONS PERSONAL
BENEFITS DERIVED FROM 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING EXPERIENCE
BY SELECTED FACTORS

Selected Factors	<u>Distribution of Responses</u>									
	No Benefit		Little Benefit		Moderate Benefit		Beneficial		Very Beneficial	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Assuming Responsibility	-	-	-	-	1	3.0	9	27.3	23	69.7
Communicating Effectively	-	-	1	3.0	2	6.1	4	12.1	26	78.8
Competing Fairly with Others	1	3.0	-	-	5	15.2	8	24.2	19	57.6
Competing with Own Record	1	3.0	1	3.0	6	18.2	8	24.2	17	51.6
Developing Job Skills	-	-	2	6.1	1	3.0	9	27.3	21	63.6
Developing Leadership Abilities	-	-	1	3.0	-	-	4	12.1	28	84.8
Gaining Self Esteem	-	-	2	6.1	1	3.0	8	24.2	22	66.7
Establishing Peer Relationships	-	-	1	3.0	5	15.2	11	33.3	16	48.5
Improving Self Confidence	-	-	1	3.0	1	3.0	7	21.2	24	72.7
Learning Public Speaking Skills	-	-	1	3.0	2	6.3	2	6.3	27	84.4
Meeting People	-	-	2	6.3	3	9.4	9	28.1	18	56.3
Participating in Meaningful Activities	-	-	2	6.1	7	21.2	5	15.2	19	57.6
Planning a Career	2	6.7	1	3.0	5	16.7	8	26.7	14	46.7

TABLE XIV (Continued)

Selected Factors	<u>Distribution of Responses</u>									
	No Benefit		Little Benefit		Moderate Benefit		Beneficial		Very Beneficial	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Setting Goals	1	3.0	3	9.1	2	6.1	11	33.3	16	48.5
Projecting a Positive Image	-	-	2	6.1	3	9.1	7	21.2	21	63.6
Preparing for Community Roles in Adulthood	-	-	2	6.1	5	15.2	7	21.2	19	57.6
Working Cooperatively with Peers	-	-	2	6.1	7	21.2	10	30.3	14	42.4
Working Cooperatively with Adults	-	-	2	6.1	6	18.2	10	30.3	15	45.5
Being of Service to Others	1	3.0	1	3.0	4	12.1	9	27.3	18	54.5
Developing Ideas	-	-	2	6.1	4	12.1	7	21.2	20	60.6
Making Decisions	-	-	1	3.0	6	18.2	8	24.2	18	54.5
Managing Time Wisely	-	-	3	9.1	7	21.2	8	24.2	15	45.5

communicating effectively, 26 responses (78.8%) as the highest three factors of personal benefits gained. The next highest ranking nine factors selected were improving self-confidence, 24 responses (72.7%), assuming responsibility, 23 responses (69.7%), gaining self-esteem, 22 responses (66.7%), projecting a positive image, 21 responses (63.6%), developing job skills, 21 respondents (63.6%), developing ideas, 20 responses (60.6%), competing fairly with others, 19 responses (57.6%), participating in meaningful activities, 19 responses (57.6%), and preparing for occupational roles in adulthood, 19 respondents (57.6%). The factors ranking in the lower half of the responses were; meeting people, 18 responses (54.5%), making decisions, 18 respondents (54.5%), Being of Service to others, 18 responses, (54.5%), preparing for community roles in adulthood, 18 responses (54.5%), competing with own record, 17 responses (51.6%), setting goals, 16 respondents (48.5%), establishing peer relationships, 16 responses (48.5%), planning a career, 14 respondents (46.7%), working cooperatively with adults 15 responses (45.5%), managing time wisely, 15 responses (45.5%) and working cooperatively with peers, 14 respondents (42.4%) respectively.

Factors Influencing Career Choice

The selected factors influencing career choice were ascertained using a "Likert-type" scale, with five levels of influence from which to select a response. Public speaking winners were asked to

rank ten factors according to the perceived influence concerning their career choice.

The data in Table XV reveals responses of state public speaking winners to factors influencing career choice.

The data revealed the four factors of most influence concerning career choice were: delivery skills involved in public speaking, 14 responses (43.8%), enhanced my awareness, knowledge, understanding, and ability to retain information concerning particular topics/subject matter areas, 12 responses (37.5%), adults associated with 4-H public speaking activities influenced my career, 12 responses, (37.5%) and travel opportunities associated with public speaking, 12 responses (37.5%). The remaining six factors in order of rank were: practice and repetition in developing public speaking, 11 responses (34.4%), organizational skills involved in developing public speaking topics, 11 responses (34.4%), personal contact with others in a particular career field, 10 responses (31.3%), status and prestige of being a state winner, 10 responses, (31.3%), competition involved in public speaking activities influenced my career choice, seven responses (21.9%) and research skills involved in developing speech topics, seven responses (21.9%).

4-H Public Speaking Winners Perceptions of Factors Influencing Community Involvement

State 4-H public speaking winners were asked to rank a series of twelve factors regarding their influence on community involvement. The factors were presented on a "Likert-type" scale

TABLE XV

A SUMMARY OF 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING WINNERS' PERCEPTIONS
CONCERNING FACTORS INFLUENCING THEIR CAREER CHOICES

Factors Influencing Career Choice	<u>Distribution of Responses</u>									
	No Benefit		Little Benefit		Moderate Benefit		Beneficial		Very Beneficial	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Personal Contact with Others in a Particular Career Field	1	3.0	6	18.8	8	25.0	7	21.9	10	31.3
Research Skills Involved in Developing Speech Topics	4	12.5	6	18.8	9	28.1	6	18.8	7	21.9
Travel Opportunities Associated with Public Speaking Activities	2	6.3	3	9.4	7	21.9	8	25.0	12	37.5
Organizational Skills Involved in Developing Public Speaking Topics	2	6.3	2	6.3	6	18.8	11	34.4	11	34.4
Delivery Skills Involved in Public Speaking Participation	1	3.1	2	6.3	3	9.4	12	37.5	7	21.9
Competition Involved in Public Speaking Activities Influenced by Career Choices	3	9.4	3	9.4	9	28.1	10	31.3	7	21.9
Status and Prestige of Being a State Winner	7	21.9	6	18.8	4	12.5	5	15.6	10	31.3
Adults Associated with 4-H Public Speaking Activities Influenced My Career	5	15.6	4	12.5	4	12.5	7	21.9	12	37.5

TABLE XV (Continued)

Factors Influencing Career Choice	<u>Distribution of Responses</u>									
	No		Little		Moderate		Beneficial		Very	
	Benefit		Benefit		Benefit		Beneficial		Beneficial	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Practices and Repetition in Developing Public Speaking	1	3.1	2	6.3	10	31.2	8	25.0	11	34.4
Enhanced my Awareness, Knowledge, Understanding, & Ability to Retain Information Concerning Particular Topics/ Subject Matter Areas	1	3.1	4	12.5	4	12.5	11	34.4	12	37.5

with responses ranging from)0 "no influence,")1 "little benefit,")2 "moderately beneficial,")3 "influential" and)4 "very influential."

Table XVI presents a summary of 4-H public speaking winners perceptions of factors influencing community involvement.

The data revealed the five factors of most influence concerning community involvement were: self-confidence developed from public speaking, 20 responses (58.8), influenced my decision to become a leader, 20 responses (58.8%), 4-H public speaking prepared me to participate in and conduct organizational meetings, 19 respondents (55.9%), 4-H public speaking helped me in developing leadership skills, 17 responses (50.0%), 4-H public speaking prepared me for assuming leadership roles, 17 responses (50.0%). The remaining seven factors in order of rank were: 4-H public speaking helped me in setting goals relative to community involvement, 15 respondents (44.1%), opportunity to lead others, 14 respondents (41.2%), the desire instilled by 4-H to share with others, 13 responses (38.2%), contact with other community leaders, ten responses (29.4%), opportunity to use public speaking skills, seven responses (20.6%), desire to use public speaking skills, seven responses (20.6%), notoriety received from participating in 4-H public speaking activities, six respondents (17.6%).

TABLE XVI

A SUMMARY OF 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING WINNERS' PERCEPTIONS OF
BENEFITS DERIVED FROM PUBLIC SPEAKING THAT INFLUENCED
THEIR LEADERSHIP BY SELECTED FACTORS OF INFLUENCE

Factors Influencing Community Involvement	<u>Distribution of Responses</u>									
	No Benefit		Little Benefit		Moderate Benefit		Beneficial		Very Beneficial	
	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%	N	%
Desire to Use Public Speaking Skills	4	11.8	4	11.8	7	20.6	12	35.3	7	20.6
Opportunity to Use Public Speaking Skills	3	8.8	4	11.8	7	20.6	13	38.2	7	20.6
Contact with Other Community Leaders	-	-	2	5.9	10	29.4	12	35.3	10	29.4
Desire Instilled by 4-H to Share with Others	2	5.9	2	5.9	4	11.8	13	38.2	13	38.2
Self-Confidence Developed from Public Speaking	1	2.9	1	2.9	1	2.9	11	32.4	20	58.8
Opportunities to Lead Others	1	2.9	3	8.8	8	23.5	8	23.5	14	41.2
Notoriety Received from Participating in 4-H Public Speaking Activities	7	20.6	12	35.3	6	17.6	3	8.8	6	17.6
4-H Public Speaking Prepared me for Assuming Leadership Role	1	2.9	2	5.9	4	11.8	10	29.4	17	50.0

Conclusions

Examination and interpretation of the major findings provided the opportunity for the author to draw the following conclusions:

1. State 4-H public speaking winners from 1953 through 1993 were white females from 31 to 40 years of age and had been involved with the 4-H program 10 to 12 years when they won the state public speaking contest.

2. Apparently the peak time for winning state public speaking contests among the public speaking participants seems to be during their senior year in high school.

3. It seemed obvious that 4-H state public speaking winners had attained the rather high levels of formal education.

4. Based on the study findings it appeared that Business/Accounting, Education and Home Economics were particularly attractive to state 4-H public speaking winners as a college major.

5. Furthermore, it seemed obvious that state public speaking winners were heavily involved in their community's churches and related activities.

6. Based on the study findings, it was concluded that personal benefits derived from 4-H public speaking activities were developing and enhancing leadership abilities and opportunities for speaking to professional groups and organizations.

7. Career choice among state public speaking winners seemed to be influenced by enhanced awareness, knowledge and understanding of the career opportunities available. Apparently, the former 4-H members were able to remember the benefits.

8. Retaining information concerning particular subject or topics as well as the travel opportunities associated with the 4-H public speaking program which enhanced their understanding and scope of life and the world around them.

9. Apparently st influencing state 4-H public speaking winners were cognizant of the self-confidence developed from public speaking and opportunities public speaking afforded them influenced them to become a leader as well as their experiences and abilities to conduct organizational meetings in preparing them for assuming community leadership roles.

Recommendations

As a result of the major findings and conclusions, the following recommendations were made.

1. Based on the value of public speaking as a 4-H activity it was apparent that Extension professionals working with the 4-H public speaking program should make every effort to strengthen the program, offering the 4-H member several public speaking opportunities instead of the traditional one or two events per year.

2. As a result of the findings concerning the benefits of the 4-H public speaking program, it was recommended that Extension use every means and opportunity available to educate and inform supporters, parents and volunteers of the objectives and benefits of participation in the public speaking program.

3. Based on the findings of the study it was strongly recommended that each field staff professional working with the 4-H

program be made aware of the benefits of 4-H public speaking and strongly encouraged Extension administrators to promote and develop support for the 4-H public speaking program at all levels.

4. It was recommended that the state 4-H office/foundation identify 4-H alumni on an up-to-date data base, listing former members enrolled in public speaking and where they reside in respective Oklahoma communities and counties. These identified alumni could serve as leaders, coaches, judges or teachers in regard to the 4-H public speaking program.

5. It was further recommended that the state 4-H office develop new, modern and up to date, public speaking materials to be used by members enrolled in the project. These should include suggested speech outlines, videos and other creative teaching methods to make public speaking for the 4-H members a more acceptable project.

6. It was recommended that the State 4-H Office develop new public speaking materials to use in training the adult 4-H volunteer leaders.

Recommendations for Additional Research

It is the author's opinion that further study concerning State 4-H public speaking program:

1. Based on the 2000 members enrolled in 4-H public speaking further study should be considered to evaluate the current program.

2. The training of Extension agents concerning objectives of the 4-H public speaking program, do agents understand the potential

benefits and possible impact of a strong, viable public speaking program, and if so, do they provide training for volunteers to work with 4-H members interested in public speaking.

3. A comparison of youth of the "80's" and "90's" with the youth of the "50's", "60's" and "70's," to determine if society tends to make a difference concerning the impact of 4-H public speaking.

BIBLIOGRAPHY

- Bryant, D. C. and Wallace, K. R. Fundamentals of public speaking. New York, NY: Appleton-Century, Crofts, 1953.
- Boyd, B. L., Herring, D. R., Briers, G. E. (Winter, 1992).
Developeping life skills in youth: How 4-H'ers perceive their leadership. Journal of Extension.
- Craig, R. P. (1961). The relationship between 4-H club experience and achievement in selected areas in vocational agriculture. (Unpub. M.S. thesis, Oklahoma State University.)
- Doll, William. (1927). The art of public speaking. New York, NY: Lyons and Carnahan.
- Griffith, L. T. (Vol. 65, No. 9). Perfect presenttions. 4-H Leader, the National Magazine for 4-H.
- Ladewig, H. and Thomas, J. K. (1987). Does 4-H make a difference? (Report No. 85). Washington, DC: Texas A&M University.
- Matulis, J., Hedges, L. E., Barrick, K., Smith, K. L. (Vol. XXVI, Spring, 1988). 4-H strikes a positive note: Impact on career development. Journal of Extension.
- Meyers, J. M. (Vol. XVI, May-June, 1978). Does participation in 4-H projects and programs help develop better leaders? Journal of Extension.
- McCully, W. B., Jr. (1958). The opinions of 4-H club members, parents, leadres, and extension workers concerning competitive activities in 4-H club work in seven Kansas counties. (Unpub. M. S. thesis, Oklahoma State University.)
- Oklahoma 4-H Awards Handbook. (1982). Stillwater, OK: Oklahoma State University.
- Schaefer, G. (1985). Helpful hints for 4-H talks. Stillwater, OK: Oklahoma Stte University.
- Wessell, M. and Wessel, T. (1982). 4-H: An american idea 1900-1980. Chevy Chase, MD: National 4-H Council.

APPENDIXES

APPENDIX A

INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD FORM

**OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY
INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD
HUMAN SUBJECTS REVIEW**

Date: 05-16-94

IRB#: AG-94-030

Proposal Title: THE BENEFITS OF THE STATE 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING PROGRAM AS PERCEIVED BY STATE 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING WINNERS 1953 THROUGH 1993

Principal Investigator(s): James White, Deborah Sharp

Reviewed and Processed as: Exempt

Approval Status Recommended by Reviewer(s): Approved

APPROVAL STATUS SUBJECT TO REVIEW BY FULL INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD AT NEXT MEETING.

APPROVAL STATUS PERIOD VALID FOR ONE CALENDAR YEAR AFTER WHICH A CONTINUATION OR RENEWAL REQUEST IS REQUIRED TO BE SUBMITTED FOR BOARD APPROVAL.

ANY MODIFICATIONS TO APPROVED PROJECT MUST ALSO BE SUBMITTED FOR APPROVAL.

Comments, Modifications/Conditions for Approval or Reasons for Deferral or Disapproval are as follows:

Signature:


Chair of Institutional Review Board

Date: May 26, 1994

APPENDIX B

COVER LETTER, FOLLOW-UP LETTERS, AND

QUESTIONNAIRE



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION SERVICE

DIVISION of AGRICULTURAL SCIENCES and NATURAL RESOURCES
OKLAHOMA STATE UNIVERSITY • (405) 744-5388 • FAX (405) 744-5339
Office of the Dean and Director • 139 Agricultural Hall • Stillwater, Oklahoma 74078-0500

June 6, 1994

Dear State 4-H Public Speaking Winner:

We are currently conducting a study concerning "The Benefits of the State 4-H Public Speaking Program." The purpose of the study will be to determine the perceived personal benefits that you derived from the 4-H Public Speaking Program and how it influenced your career choice and your community involvement.


Your input and involvement is critical to the success of this study and acquiring accurate information that will provide a valid perspective. Hopefully, as a result of this study; parents, volunteer leaders and 4-H Agents will be better able to help those involved in public speaking and provide the kind of encouragement and assistance that will benefit 4-H members in their development of life skills.

Only State 4-H Public Speaking winners such as yourself have been invited to participate in the study.

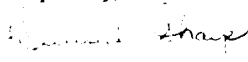
Responses will only be reported in the aggregate to maintain strict confidentiality. Your identity and trust will not be violated because of the manner in which the data will be described. All survey instruments will be destroyed upon completion of the study. Please take a few minutes to respond to the survey questions and assist us in emphasizing and providing positive 4-H public speaking experiences for all who choose to participate.

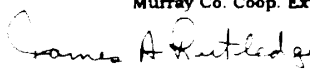
Please return the completed survey booklet in the enclosed stamped pre-addressed envelope.

Again, your efforts are greatly appreciated and we thank you for helping "To Make The Best Better".


James D. White
Professor & Thesis Adviser
Agricultural Education

Respectfully,


Deborah L. Sharp
County Extension Director
Murray Co. Coop. Ext. Service


James A. Rutledge
Program Leader
4-H & Youth Development

July 12, 1994

Greetings Former 4-H Member,

As a former 4-H public speaking winner you were recently mailed a questionnaire regarding a study titled "The Benefits of the 4-H Public Speaking Program as Perceived by State Public Speaking Winners in Oklahoma from 1953 through 1993". As of this date I have not received your response.

Would you please take a few minutes to complete the questionnaire and return in the self-addressed, stamped envelope which was provided at the time of the mailing? I am holding the analysis of data in hopes of hearing from you soon.

Thank you for your time and hopefully for your response. The information this study reveals will have an impact on planning tomorrow's 4-H Public Speaking program - won't you be part of the study?

If you have questions or need further information please contact me at 405-622-3016 or at 405-223-7411 after 5 pm.

Sincerely,

Debbie Sharp
OSU Graduate Student

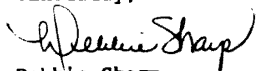
Greetings Former 4-H Public Speaker,

This is a final request to ask your cooperation in completing the questionnaire recently mailed to you regarding the state 4-H Public Speaking program in Oklahoma.

I am holding the compiling of data until I have received all completed forms. Will you please take a moment to assist with this study? Your assistance will be greatly appreciated.

Thanks for helping us to "Make the Best Better".

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Debbie Sharp".

Debbie Sharp
OSU Graduate Student



Questionnaire for the study:

*The Benefits of the 4-H
Public Speaking Program as
Perceived by State Public
Speaking Winners in
Oklahoma from
1953 through 1993*

PART V: Open-Response Items.

Please indicate your responses in the space provided below.

***If you have been or are currently working with the 4-H public speaking program, please describe the nature of your involvement:**

***Make any additional comments you have about your experiences in the 4-H public speaking program:**

PART II: Personal benefits derived from 4-H public speaking experiences

Please rate the selected factors you feel were beneficial as a result of your 4-H public speaking experience. On the scale below indicate your rank of "0" to "4" with a check (✓) indicating the perceived benefits with "0" being of "no benefit" and 4 being "very beneficial"

	No Benefit 0	Somewhat Beneficial 1	Moderately Beneficial 2	Beneficial 3	Very Beneficial 4
Assuming responsibility					
Communicating effectively					
Competing fairly with others					
Competing with own record					
Developing job skills					
Developing leadership abilities					
Gaining self esteem					
Establishing peer relationships					
Improving self-confidence					
Learning public speaking skills					
Meeting people					
Participating in meaningful activities					
Planning a career					
Setting goals					
Projecting a positive image					
Preparing for community roles in adulthood					
Preparing for occupational roles in adulthood					
Working cooperatively with peers					
Working cooperatively with adults					
Being of service to others					
Developing ideas					
Making decisions					
Managing time wisely					
Other (please specify)					

PART III: Factors Influencing Career Choice

Please indicate with a check mark (✓) on the rating scale below to what extent each of the following factors influenced your career choice, with "0" being "no influence" and "4" being "very influential".

	No Influence	Somewhat Influential	Moderately Influential	Influential	Very Influential
	0	1	2	3	4
Personal contact with others in a particular career field					
Research skills involved in developing speech topics					
Travel opportunities associated with public speaking activities					
Organizational skills involved in developing public speaking topics					
Delivery skills involved in public speaking participation					
Competition involved in public speaking activities influenced my career choice					
Status and prestige of being a state winner					
Adults (leaders, judges, agents, sponsors, etc.) associated with 4-H public speaking activities influenced my career					
Practice and repetition in developing public speaking					
Enhanced my awareness, knowledge, understanding and ability to retain information concerning particular topics/subject matter areas					

PART IV: Community Involvement

Please indicate with a check mark (✓) on the rating scale below to what extent each of the following factors influenced your decision to become involved in community leadership activities, with "0" being "no influence" and "4" being "very influential".

	No Influence	Somewhat Influential	Moderately Influential	Influential	Very Influential
	0	1	2	3	4
Desire to use public speaking skills					
Opportunity to use public speaking skills					
Contact with other community leaders					
The desire instilled by 4-H to share with others					
Self-confidence developed from public speaking					
Opportunity to lead others					
Notoriety received from participating in 4-H public speaking activities					
4-H public speaking prepared me for assuming leadership roles					
4-H public speaking helped me in developing leadership skills					
4-H public speaking prepared me to participate in and conduct organizational meetings					
4-H public speaking influenced my decision to become a leader					
4-H public speaking helped me in setting goals relative to community involvement					

5. Grade/Class of which you were a member when attending National 4-H Congress:

- ☐ 9th (freshman)
- ☐ 10th (sophomore)
- ☐ 11th (junior)
- ☐ 12th (senior)
- ☐ college freshman
- ☐ college junior

6. Highest level of formal education:

- ☐ high school graduate
- ☐ trade or vocational school
- ☐ junior college (program completed)
- ☐ some college/university training
- ☐ baccalaureate degree (4 yr. college/university)
- ☐ other (please specify _____)

7. Educational area(s) in which you majored while attending the above college/university: Example: education, business, home economics, animal science, etc.

8. Current involvement in community organizations/activities: (check all that apply)

- ☐ church-related activities
- ☐ community organizations (examples: Rotary, Chamber of Commerce, Business and Professional Women's Club, etc.)
- ☐ volunteer organizations (example: hospital auxiliary, blood drives, local school PTA, etc.)
- ☐ other involvement (please specify _____)
- ☐ not involved in community activities/organizations

APPENDIX C

SELECTED COMMENTS

"The 4-H program, generally, and public speaking specifically, is responsible for the professional success in my life. It gave me the opportunity to pursue goals, see the world, weigh options and develop skills. The program was absolutely the turning point in my life" !

"The self-confidence developed in the 4-H public speaking program is solely the reason I'm with one of the largest financial companies in the world for 32 years, traveling all over the United States as a corporate spokesperson 23 of my 32 years. My personal financial gain (without a college degree) is due to 4-H public speaking".

"The 4-H public speaking program turned a little girl who was so shy she hated school into a high school student who had the courage to attend Citizenship Washington Focus and National Congress in Chicago. It also gave me the courage to face going from a class of 14 to a college campus of over 20,000 people, 4 hours from home".

"4-H was a big part of my life, especially my public speaking and leadership activities. I learned many skills through the 4-H program".

"Anytime I have gotten up to speak, in adulthood, people have always commented on it. Learning to write and organizing speeches, and effective delivery of those speeches in 4-H, has allowed me to feel extremely comfortable to speak in front of others"!

"The program was very beneficial to me, especially because I was shy and introverted due to an early speech impediment. The regular opportunities provided by speech and demonstration contests really helped. We also had involvement with the Toastmaster's in our local club which helped greatly in stressing mechanics. I think the public speaking program is especially effective when paired with strong participation in one or more other projects".

"Single most influential 4-H activity I participated in. It's funny - I still remember my talks and demonstrations 20 years after I left 4-H club work".

"I've always wanted to be an attorney, since I was quite young. At the present I am an assistant District Attorney therefore, I am in court every day. My 4-H public speaking experience has played a tremendous role in my feeling at ease in a courtroom".

"Very simply...without 4-H I wouldn't be in the U.S. Congress today".

"There needs to be more contact throughout the year, district contests, etc.".

"Because of 4-H experiences I interviewed and got my first public school teaching job with an enrichment program of "personal speaking skills".

"My experiences were invaluable and led me to become a community leader as well successful business owner. 4-H helped me to lay the bedrock. Public speaking was very influential in helping me to develop my leadership skills".

"The year after I was public speaking winner, I won a state 4-H banking lecture contest and was invited to speak before the Oklahoma Banker's Association. News of that was carried by my local radio station where I had applied for a job after high school graduation. Because the station knew about my 4-H winnings, they auditioned and hired me when I was 17 years old. That began my 31 year career in communications, 25 of which has been in agricultural communications. I am now Chief of the Video Teleconference and Radio Center at the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Washington, D.C. I know that my 4-H public speaking and the resultant recognition directly led me to my career. Yes, definitely, the 4-H public speaking program equipped me for my career and for my life".

"I will always have positive memories of my 4-H public speaking experiences. I am presently a speech therapist and always stress the importance of communication for a positive personal image".

"This program influenced my entire career, as a speech major, and now as a national leader of the largest academic honor society in North America. 4-H made this Oklahoma farm boy a winner"!

VITA

Deborah L. Sharp

Candidate for the Degree of

Master of Science

Thesis: PERSONAL BENEFITS OF 4-H PUBLIC SPEAKING AS PERCEIVED BY
STATE PUBLIC SPEAKING WINNERS IN OKLAHOMA FROM 1953
THROUGH 1993

Major Field: Agricultural Education

Biographical:

Personal Data: Born in Tyler, Texas, February 26, 1953 to James
and Jo Honeywell. Married to Ronald J. Sharp and reside in
Ardmore, Oklahoma. Mother of 4 children, Scott, Amy,
Michael Bryan, and Patrick.

Education: Graduated from Valliant High School, Valliant,
Oklahoma, in May, 1971; received Bachelor of Science
Degree in Home Economics Education from Southeastern
Oklahoma State University, Durant in 1977 and a Bachelor
of Science degree in Elementary Education from
Southeastern Oklahoma State University, Durant, in 1979;
Completed requirements for the Master of Science degree,
Oklahoma State University, Stillwater, Oklahoma in
December, 1994.

Professional Experience: Johnson O'Malley Tutor for Native
American Children for 1 year, Boswell Public Schools,
Boswell, Oklahoma 1978-79; Elementary teacher, Boswell
Public Schools, Boswell, Oklahoma, 1980-1984; Oklahoma
Cooperative Extension Service, 4-H Agent, Choctaw County,
1984-1987, Extension Home Economist, Marshall County,
1987-1989, Extension Home Economist, Murray County, 1989-
present.

Professional Organizations: Member, National Association
Extension Home Economist, 1984 to present, Epsilon Sigma
Phi, 1987 to present.