

A LEADERSHIP PROFILE OF FFA STATE OFFICERS WORK ETHIC:
A PRELIMINARY STUDY OF STATE FFA OFFICERS

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Leadership training has long been considered a strength of the FFA organization. For most FFA members, a State FFA Officer is the role model that members would (and should) pattern themselves after and admire. Leadership training has been an integral part of the Agricultural Education program and the Future Farmers of America (FFA) since their inception. These organizations have both sought ways to better develop leadership in Agricultural Education students. As part of this search, how can our state officers/leaders in the FFA be described, and how do they perceive their work ethic? What factors influence the officers' perceptions of their work ethic? In an organization that places such high regard on leadership as the FFA does, information about the characteristics of our leaders and their self-perception of work ethic is vital for improving our leadership training programs and advising functions (Owings and Nelson, 1977). Findings from this study revealed that FFA state officers from the years of 1999 and 2000 that encompassed this study were involved in an average of 2.38 community organizations, 1.90 high school sports activities, and 4.27 non-sports extracurricular activities. In addition, nearly half of the respondents were high school class officers or members of their high school student council. Sixty-five percent of respondents were 4-H members at one time. This purposeful sample of FFA state officers attended 49 other formal leadership training activities outside of the FFA. The most influential group that provides support and encouragement for a FFA member who seeks FFA State Office is that of the immediate family. When arranged in subgroups, 1999 and 2000 FFA state officers possessed different perceptions toward the 15 work categories. Females were found to have significantly less positive perception of their planning and organization work skills when compared to their male peers, while they had a significantly more positive perception of their analytical ability, adaptability to work assignments, creativity, and conflict resolution work skills than their male counterparts. Satisfaction gained from participation in team or individual activities was also found to differentiate respondents regarding their perception of work. In nine work categories (judgment, analytical ability, adaptability to work assignments, ability to work under pressure, creativity, communication skills, interpersonal skills, leadership, and conflict resolution), respondents who gained satisfaction from team activities were found to have a significantly more positive perception toward the work categories than those respondents who gained satisfaction from individual activities.

Introduction/Theoretical Framework

Leadership training has long been considered a strength of the FFA organization. For most FFA members, a State FFA Officer is the role model that members would (and should) pattern themselves after and admire. While there seems to be common traits and descriptors for leaders within the FFA, and past research has identified these items, there is a lack of understanding about how State FFA Officers self perceive their work ethic and how they perceive their leadership training experiences.

Many studies have been conducted in the past that relate to leadership and the FFA. Carter and Spotanski (1989) identified ten scales or traits important in high school leaders. The ten traits are “drive, cohesiveness, productivity, achievement, attitude toward group work, leadership, self-confidence, cooperation, citizenship, and personal development (Table 1, page 2.)”. Lasap (1971) studied past National FFA officers' leadership traits and the number of offices held in the FFA, and concluded that leadership traits are directly related to level of participation and number of offices in the FFA. While studying the relationship of participation in FFA activities and development of leadership skills, Townsend and Carter(1983) concluded that there is a direct relationship between level of participation and leadership skills. Owings and Nelson (1977) looked at the temperament of chapter and state FFA officers attending the FFA Washington Conference Program in 1976. They found little difference in types as identified by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator of chapter and national FFA officers. Rollins, Miller, and Kahler (1988) identified temperaments preferred by students in agricultural education and their levels of critical thinking. Almost one third of the respondents studied were either ESTP (Extroverted-Sensing-Thinking-Perceptive) or ISTP (Introverted-Sensing-Thinking-Perceptive) learning styles as identified by the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI). Horner (1988) identified MBTI preference type of agricultural teacher educators and supervisors of vocational agriculture nationwide, and found ISTJ (Introverted-Sensing-Thinking-Judgmental), and ESTJ (Extroverted-Sensing-Thinking-Judgmental) to be the most common types. Brick, Townsend, Briers, Cummins, and Conrad (2000) examined the relationship among leadership perceptions of FFA members in relation to chapter size, length of FFA membership, level of FFA involvement, and officers' positions held. They found these traits to be important factors in determining self-perceptions of leadership skills, yet length of FFA membership was not.

While research has been conducted relating leadership style and the FFA, little or no research had been conducted concerning the state officer's attitudes concerning their work ethic, nor their own leadership training experiences. The transition from an economy based on local agriculture and manufacturing markets to a global, information-based economy has been accompanied by an increasing orientation toward jobs based on mental rather than physical activity. Work ethic still applies, just in a different manner (Naylor 1988). In other curricular areas as well as in industry, research has been done to describe effective workers and effective teachers. State FFA officers will become these workers, and possibly even teachers as part of their future endeavors. Jensen and Templeton (1993) analyzed teachers using criteria from a national study of peak performers. Characteristics identified were the teacher's ability to get things done, specialized knowledge required in their field, self reliance, work habits, ability to get along with others, leadership ability, organizational ability, ability to put orders from superiors in effect, common sense, intuition, creativity, inventiveness, reading skill, public speaking ability, ability to motivate

subordinates, willpower, general intelligence, self-confidence, conversational ability, writing skill, and ability to make money. Foster and Finley (1995) examined the relationship of teacher knowledge and personal development skills in agricultural education. They found effective agriculture teachers were individually strong in human relation and personal attitudes, adept at conflict resolution, highly motivated, committed to personal feelings, utilized good public relation skills, were accepted by co-workers, demonstrated leadership and cooperation, possessed good human relation skills, and demonstrated good professional etiquette. As part of the preparation for the role as a State FFA Officer, students will undergo many different leadership training activities that emphasize these skills.

It is becoming more and more apparent that work ethic and employability skills are listed as something needed for job success and are areas that require immediate attention from agricultural education programs (Hill and Petty, 1995). With respect to work attitudes, the concept of work ethic is related to the desirable characteristics for a potential employee (Custer and Claiborne, 1991; Hill, 1992).

Leadership training has been an integral part of the agricultural education program and the Future Farmers of America (FFA) since their inception. Agricultural education and the FFA have both sought ways to better develop leadership in agricultural education students. As part of this search, how can state officers/leaders in the FFA be described, and how do they perceive their work ethic? What factors influence the officers' perceptions of their work? In an organization that places such high regard on leadership as the FFA does, information about the characteristics of our leaders and their self-perceived work ethic is vital for improving our leadership training programs and advising function (Owings and Nelson, 1977). Educators need to recognize the need to include work ethic in the curriculum of the school. The importance of work ethic should be enunciated, with both students and colleagues, as an aspect of preparation for work (Hill and Petty, 1995).

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of the study was to describe selected state officer demographic variables and evaluate their self-perceived work ethic.

In order to accomplish the purpose of this study, specific objectives have been developed. These objectives include:

1. To develop a leadership profile of the respondents;
2. To develop a categorical work profile of the respondents;
3. To compare the level of perceived work among different subgroups of the selected group of FFA state officers.

Methods

This study described and measured a purposeful sample of FFA state officers' leadership characteristics and self-perception toward fifteen work-related categories in an attempt to

identify relationships between characteristics such as satisfaction gained from team and individual activities, gender and FFA state officers' self-perceived work ethic.

Section one of the instrument used for this study was originally developed by the Human Resource Development (HRD) program at the Westinghouse Waste Isolation Division, which operates the Waste Isolation Pilot Plant (WIPP) for the US Department of Energy located near Carlsbad, New Mexico. The instrument originated with the need to establish a development program geared toward the non-management employee. In an attempt to set forth the development program, the Human Resource Development and Total Quality (HRD&TQ) Department began development of the Successful Professional (SUPRO) Development Program. SUPRO consisted of self-paced and classroom courses built upon the Westinghouse 12 Conditions for Excellence. One condition was development, specifically focusing on self-assessment and development in the workplace. To encourage self-assessment, HRD&TQ developed a paper-and-pencil self-assessment tool. HRD&TQ conducted focus groups with managers, employees, and customers to determine the content of the self-assessment tool. HRD&TQ piloted the tool and made modifications. HRD&TQ calculated KR-20 coefficients and standard error and found them to be acceptable (A numeric coefficient was not provided to the researcher). Over 300 division personnel participated in the program, and the SUPRO program has been transferred to over 500 organizations across the US through the federal government's technology transfer program. The researchers received permission to use and modify the original instrument. The original instrument had 20 categories and one hundred items. The five categories omitted from the instrument used in this study are job knowledge, related work knowledge, cost consciousness, industrial safety, and supervision level. All items remaining were reworded for the context of a FFA state officer. This first section of the data collection instrument (perceptions) consisted of 75 perception statements (15 categories, five statements for each category) to which respondents were directed to use a Likert-type response scale ranging from always (5), to nearly always (4), to often (3), to occasionally (2), to rarely (1), to never (0). It has also been used to assess the work ethic of college of agriculture freshman (Frick and Crawford)

Demographic variables in section two included gender, satisfaction gained from team or individual activities, formal leadership training received, other leadership experiences of FFA state officers, and influence of other people to become a state officer. For the purpose of this study, another pilot study was conducted using 29 prospective college of agriculture students who were attending a summer workshop on campus. The prospective students were not involved in the main data collection procedure and were used to determine instrument reliability and to surface any questions or concerns.

The Cronbach's alpha reliability coefficient was .97 for the pilot test of the self-perception of work instrument (75 items). A Cronbach's alpha was also computed for every one of the 15 categories (5 items per category), which constitutes section one of the survey instrument. The Cronbach's Alpha Coefficients for each of the 15 work categories are (1)Quality of Work-Alpha =.7299; (2)Quantity of Work-Alpha =.7049; (3)Judgment-Alpha = .7816; (4)Initiative-Alpha = .8387; (5)Dependability-Alpha = .7810; (6)Analytical Ability-Alpha =.8573; (7)Adaptability to work assignments-Alpha = .7392; (8)Ability to work under pressure-Alpha =.7758; (9)Creativity-Alpha =.7373; (10)Planning and Organization-Alpha =.7450; (11)Communication

skills-Alpha =.6847; (12)Interpersonal Skills-Alpha =.7730; (13)Leadership- Alpha=.7946; (14)Attendance and punctuality-Alpha =.7912, and; (15)Conflict resolution-Alpha =.7253. The category with the highest reliability estimate was Analytical Ability (.8573). In addition, a Principle Components Analysis was conducted on the 15 work category summary scores. In this analysis, all 15 of the category summary scores loaded significantly (loading .400 or greater) on the first factor. The Eigen value associated with this factor was 8.817 accounting for 58.7% of the total variance in the 15 summary scores. The results of this analysis are consistent with high Cronbach's Alpha coefficients calculated for the fifteen summary scores, indicating that the instrument for this group of respondents measured a single construct, "work."

Since this study was preliminary in nature, an intact population of FFA state officers was assessed over a two-year period to provide baseline data reflecting FFA state officers' self-perceptions of work. The intact population included 169 FFA state officers, reflecting state officers who attended the 1999 and 2000 National Leadership Conference for State Officers (NLC SO), the largest gathering of FFA state officers in the nation. The researcher or national FFA staff did not purposefully select FFA state officers attending the conference. A total of 169 surveys were collected and used for analysis. This represented a usable response rate of 100% of the subjects who were enrolled in the course.

Data were collected using optically scanned answer sheets, which instructed respondents to indicate their responses using #2 lead pencils. Data were entered into a Microsoft Excel®™ Spreadsheet. Data analysis was completed using procedures available through SPSS 10.0 for Windows.

Descriptive statistics were generated on the 15 instrument categories and the demographic variables. Cronbach's alpha was calculated for each of the 15 work categories. Nonparametric statistics (Mann-Whitney U Test) were used to compare subgroups since representativeness was not obtained through the use of probability sampling approaches.

Results and Discussion

Results/Findings

The first objective sought to develop a leadership profile of the respondents. Table 1 presents the means and standard deviations for formal leadership training that state FFA officers indicated they received prior to attending the National Leadership Conference for State Officers. The most commonly attended leadership training was Blastoff followed by Made For Excellence, Washington Leadership Conference, State Convention, and State Presidents' Conference. The most common non-FFA leadership training that state officers attended was the National 4-H Congress with five respondents attending. FFA state officers attended 49 other formal leadership training events (National 4-H Congress, Hugh O'Brian Youth Conference, Coop Leadership Conference, Boys State, and others) outside of the FFA.

Table 1

Formal Leadership Training of 1999 and 2000 FFA State Officers attending NLCSO

<u>Leadership Training</u>	FFA Region				Total N=169
	East	South	West	Midwest	
	n=41	n=41	n=46	n=41	
	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	
Blastoff	28	18	28	19	93
Made For Excellence	15	15	20	22	72
Wash Leadership Conference	7	16	17	18	58
FFA State Convention	9	11	13	10	43
FFA State Presidents Conference	12	1	3	8	24
Local FFA Chapter Officer Training	3	3	1	0	7
National 4-H Congress	1	1	0	3	5
FFA Greenhand Conference	0	0	3	2	5
Hugh O'Brian Youth Conf. (HOBY)	1	1	1	1	4
Coop Leadership Conference	1	2	0	1	4
Ch. Officer Leader Training(COLT)	2	1	0	1	4
Boys State	1	1	1	1	4
Other Leadership Training	4	17	5	6	32

Table 2 presents other leadership experiences of FFA state officers. Sixty-five percent of respondents were 4-H members at one time. Their mean membership in community organizations was 2.39 and only 4.4% of respondents indicated that they were not members of any community organization. The mean membership of respondents in high school athletics was 1.90 and only 8% of respondents were not a member of any high school athletic team. The mean membership of respondents in non-sports extracurricular activities was 4.27 and only 6.6% of the respondents indicated that they were not members in any non-sports extracurricular activities. Nearly half of the respondents were either a high school student council member (46.1%) or a high school class officer (45.5%). A majority of State FFA state officers gained more satisfaction from participating in team activities (66.8%) than from individual activities (33.1%).

Table 2.

Other Leadership Experience of 1999 and 2000 FFA State Officers

<u>Other Leadership Experience</u>	FFA Region				Total N=169
	East	South	West	Midwest	
	n=41	n=41	n=46	n=41	
	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	
4-H Member	19	29	32	31	111
Membership in community organ	32 ^a	37 ^a	34 ^a	40 ^a	143 ^a
Particip.-HS athletics	27 ^a	28 ^a	33 ^a	39 ^a	127 ^a
Particip.- non-sports extracurr act.	34 ^a	39 ^a	40 ^a	40 ^a	153 ^a
HS Student Council member	11	22	26	19	78
HS Class Officer	10	16	24	27	77
More satisfaction-team activities	30	24	30	27	111
More satisfaction- individual act.	9	17	15	14	55
	<u>M.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>M.</u>	<u>M.</u>
Mean semesters of HS agriculture	7.43	7.13	7.46	7.53	7.39
Mean Years in FFA	4.62	4.56	4.14	4.46	4.45
Mean Years in 4-H	6.63	5.79	4.81	7.96	6.30

^a Respondents were asked to indicate the total number of community organizations to which they belonged as well their membership in sports and non-sports extracurricular activities.

Table 3 depicts the influence certain groups of individuals had on the respondents' motivation to become a FFA state officer. By far, the most influential group influencing the respondents to run for an officer position was immediate family members (43%). Surprisingly, respondents indicated that others (peers) were the second most common influence in their decision to run for a FFA state office. The third most common influence was the respondent. It is important to note that respondents were asked to indicate who, besides their FFA Advisor, influenced them to seek a FFA state office. Respondents did not note guidance counselors as an influence to seek a FFA state office. Respondents were instructed to select only the top influence in their decision to seek FFA state office.

Table 3.

Individuals who influenced 1999 and 2000 FFA State Officers to seek a FFA State Office

<u>Influential Categories</u>	FFA Region				<u>Total</u>	%
	East	South	West	Midwest		
	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>	<i>f</i>		
Immediate family	22	23	11	17	73	43%
Other (Peers)	8	5	11	5	29	17%
Yourself	6	5	8	7	26	15%
High School Teacher	3	0	6	3	12	7%
Extended Family	0	2	1	2	5	3%
Community expectations	0	1	0	2	3	2%
Religious Organizations	1	1	0	0	2	1%
Guidance Counselor	0	0	0	0	0	0%

The second objective sought to develop a categorical work profile of the respondents. Table 4 presents the means and standard deviations for the fifteen work categories. The highest mean of the work categories was “leadership” with a mean of 20.09, whereas the work category with the two lowest means were “planning and organization” with a mean score of 14.19 and “conflict resolution” with a mean score of 14.20. Adapting the scale adopted from the Human Resource Development (HRD) program at the Westinghouse Waste Isolation Division for this study, a mean for a category (5 items per category with a possible high score of 25) between 25-20 is considered a strength with little or no development needed in this area; a mean between 19-15 is considered within normal range for this work performance factor; a mean score between 14-10 indicates a need for improvement needed for this work performance factor; and a mean between nine and zero denotes a need for immediate improvement in this performance factor. Although none of the category means were in the lowest ranges, some respondents did score in this range. All respondents were given an opportunity to determine their individual scores as a means to identify work categories where they may need to focus their attention.

Table 4.

Means and Standard Deviations of Categories of Work Perceptions by FFA State Officers.

No.	Work Categories and Descriptions	<u>M</u> ^{a,b}	S.D.
1.	Quality of work--Thoroughness and acceptability of work produced or accomplished	18.01	3.22
2.	Quantity of work--Volume of acceptable work	17.40	4.78
3.	Judgment--Soundness of conclusions, decisions, and actions	16.80	4.80
4.	Initiative--Ability to take effective action without being told	15.23	5.41
5.	Dependability--Reliability in assuming and carrying out commitments, obligations, and assignments	19.33	4.56
6.	Analytical Ability--Effectiveness in thinking through a problem	16.59	5.11

Table 4 (continued)

No.	Work Categories and Descriptions	<u>M.</u> ^{a,b}	S.D.
7.	Adaptability to Work Assignments--Ability to learn new knowledge and complete a variety of assignments	15.98	5.21
8.	Ability to Work Under Pressure--Perform under unusual circumstances and in meeting tight schedules	15.96	5.04
9.	Creativity--Ability to generate worthwhile new ideas and perspectives	15.04	5.54
10.	Planning and Organization--Ability to plan and organize activities to meet priorities	14.19	5.51
11.	Communication Skills--Effectiveness communicating with peers, advisor, and teachers	17.62	4.61
12.	Interpersonal Skills--Works effectively with others in a FFA context	18.68	4.92
13.	Leadership--Demonstration of leadership characteristics and qualities	20.09	4.35
14.	Attendance and punctuality--Attends class on a regular basis, on time and ready at start of leadership activity or class; devotes appropriate hours to assignments	17.09	5.44
15.	Conflict Resolution--Ability to handle conflict and disagreements between self and others (fellow students, FFA members and advisor)	14.20	5.75

^a Mean calculated from a Likert-type response scale ranging from Always (5), to Nearly Always (4), to Often (3), to Occasionally (2), to Rarely (1), to Never (0).

^b Total Category scale ranged from 0 to 25.

The third objective sought to compare the level of perceived work among different subgroups of the selected group of FFA state officers. Two demographic variables were used to select subgroups used for analysis: gender and satisfaction gained from individual or team activities.

The Mann-Whitney U test was employed to make comparisons between female and male respondents. As shown in Table 5, five categories, analytical ability, adaptability to work assignments, creativity, planning and organization and conflict resolution, were found to be significantly different at the .05 probability level. The two highest category mean ranks for males were quality of work and planning and organization while those categories were the lowest and third lowest mean ranks for females. The lower the mean rank, the higher the self-perception of the subgroup of respondents for that work category. The results show that males perceived themselves as having a significantly more positive work self-perception than females in four of the four significant categories (analytical ability, adaptability to work assignments, creativity, and conflict resolution) and only a significantly less positive work self perception in one category (planning and organization).

Table 5.

Comparison of Work Category Mean Ranks using the Mann-Whitney U test by Gender of Respondents.

<u>Work Category</u>	Mean Rank		U-Value	U-Prob
	Male (n=85)	Female (n=84)		
1 Quality of Work	90.35	81.59	3280.5	0.24
2 Quantity of Work	89.30	82.66	3371.5	0.38
3 Judgment	82.80	89.24	3379.5	0.39
4 Initiative	85.67	86.33	3627.0	0.93
5 Dependability	85.48	86.53	3610.0	0.89
6 Analytical Ability	77.06	95.05	2886.0	0.02*
7 Adaptability to work assignments	78.34	93.75	2996.5	0.04*
8 Ability to work under pressure	79.78	92.29	3120.0	0.10
9 Creativity	82.90	89.14	3388.5	0.02*
10 Planning and Organization	89.06	82.90	3306.0	0.04*
11 Communication skills	81.94	90.11	3306.0	0.10
12 Interpersonal skills	81.22	90.84	3243.5	0.20
13 Leadership	84.66	87.36	3539.5	0.72
14 Attendance and punctuality	86.74	85.25	3591.5	0.84
15 Conflict resolution	76.59	95.52	2845.5	0.01*

* U-Prob < .05.

Likert-type response scale ranging from Always (5), to Nearly Always (4), to Often (3), to Occasionally (2), to Rarely (1), to Never (0).

Table 6 shows the results of comparing the subgroups by satisfaction gained from participating in team or individual activities. Nine categories were found to be significantly different using the Mann-Whitney U test. Those nine categories are judgment, analytical ability, adaptability to work assignments, ability to work under pressure, creativity, communication skills, interpersonal skills, leadership, and conflict resolution. The lower the mean rank, the higher the self-perception of the subgroup of respondents for that work category. Results show that respondents who gained more satisfaction from team activities perceived themselves as having a significantly more positive work self-perception than those who gained more satisfaction from individual activities in all of the significant work categories identified in Table 6.

Table 6

Comparison of Work Category Mean Ranks using the Mann-Whitney U test by Satisfaction Gained from Participation in Team or Individual Activities of Respondents.

Work Category	Mean Rank		U-Value	U-Prob
	Team (n=114)	Individual (n=55)		
Quality of Work	80.91	91.88	2701.5	0.17
Quantity of Work	82.87	87.85	2923.5	0.53
Judgment	80.11	93.52	2611.5	0.09*
Initiative	82.46	88.70	2876.5	0.43
Dependability	80.94	91.81	2705.5	0.17
Analytical Ability	80.12	93.51	2612.0	0.09*
Adaptability to work assignments	76.58	100.78	2212.0	0.00*
Ability to work under pressure	78.75	96.32	2457.5	0.03*
Creativity	77.51	98.86	2317.5	0.01*
Planning and Organization	84.86	83.76	3067.0	0.89
11 Communication skills	74.38	105.29	1964.0	0.00*
12 Interpersonal skills	75.00	104.03	2033.5	0.00*
13 Leadership	77.30	99.30	2293.5	0.01*
14 Attendance and punctuality	83.03	87.53	2941.0	0.57
15 Conflict resolution	76.58	100.76	2213.0	0.00*

* U-Prob < .05.

Likert-type response scale ranging from Always (5), to Nearly Always (4), to Often (3), to Occasionally (2), to Rarely (1), to Never (0).

Conclusions/Recommendations/Implications

The leadership profile of FFA state officers found in this study provides for some interesting observations and implications related to area of leadership in the FFA. First, it needs to be recognized that FFA leaders find others venues for leadership training besides the FFA. FFA state officers attended 53 other formal leadership training activities outside of the FFA. Sixty-five percent of respondents were 4-H members at one time. It is recommended that we encourage and support our FFA members to receive leadership training when other opportunities are present. This can only serve to provide more competent leadership within the ranks of the FFA organization. Agriculture education teachers are not the only educators who teach and stress leadership. It is apparent by the results of this study that a considerable number of FFA state officers are receiving some formal leadership training outside the auspices of the FFA.

It is important to note the critical role that immediate family plays in supporting and encouraging FFA members to seek a FFA state office. It must be ensured that current and future FFA advisors understand the importance of cooperating with the families FFA members that are running for FFA state office. Family members' full support will make for a better officer

candidate who will more completely fulfill the duties of the office with less chance for complications.

From the finds of this study, it can be surmised that FFA state officers are extremely busy. FFA state officers from the two years that encompass this study were involved in an average of 2.38 community organizations, 1.90 high school sports activities, and 4.27 non-sports extracurricular activities. In addition, nearly half of the respondents were a high school class officer or a member of their high school student council. FFA advisors must recognize and respect the other leadership experiences of this group of FFA leaders, which have facilitated the attainment of the cumulative leadership skills they possess.

When arranged in subgroups, 1999 and 2000 FFA state officers possessed different perceptions toward the 15 work categories. Females were found to have less positive perception of their planning and organization work skills when compared to their male peers, while they had more positive perception of their analytical ability, adaptability to work assignments, creativity, and conflict resolution work skills than their male counterparts. Satisfaction gained from participation in team or individual activities was also found to differentiate respondents regarding their perception of work. In nine work categories (judgment, analytical ability, adaptability to work assignments, ability to work under pressure, creativity, communication skills, interpersonal skills, leadership, and conflict resolution), respondents who gained satisfaction from team activities were found to have a more positive perception toward these work categories than those respondents who gained satisfaction from individual activities. Further study, using parametric procedures, needs to be conducted with a FFA state officer population using inferential sampling procedures to determine further differences toward perceptions of work categories that can be inferred to a population of FFA state officers from across the nation. The results from this analysis could assist FFA advisors in forming more effective committees and assigning specific leadership tasks within FFA chapters and associations.

Although this was a preliminary study, the results imply the potential utility of the self-perceived work ethic instrument. The instrument can be used as a tool for FFA state officer self-assessment or be employed in a group context. The work ethic instrument, coupled with another instrument (i.e., learning styles), can assist local FFA advisors and FFA state advisors in counseling potential or current officers about their perceived work ethic. With sufficient evidence generated from this instrument, advisors could develop workshops focusing on deficient work perceptions of FFA officers and members. A FFA leadership seminar could use the results of this survey to help identify needs FFA members have in the realm of work performance. FFA advisors and others, including agricultural education teacher educators, who counsel FFA state officers should consider administering this instrument through a number of methods: individual members, local FFA officers interested in an agricultural education degree, and FFA members who aspire to hold a FFA state office.

It is recognized that the data collected from respondents cannot be generalized to any population on a statistical basis. However, the findings may have practical implications for agricultural education faculty, FFA state advisors, and local FFA advisors, and should direct researchers to further examine work ethic issues within the leadership of the FFA.

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