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Focus and Scope

Journal Of Youth And Community Development (JYCD) fills a unique and critical niche in the youth development arena: it is a place designed for bridging applied research and practice. In other words, it addresses issues and features studies and practice efforts that have implications for those workingwith and on behalf of young people in youth-serving organizations and the intermediaries that support them.

To that end, we have refined our section policies below. We seek Feature Articles that address important topics, issues and trends, Research & Evaluation Studies that share new findings from approaches to applied research and evaluation, and Program & Practice Articles that present and discuss programs, practices, trainings and policies designed to inform and improve practice. These sections are peer-reviewed, and authors need to specify how their articles bridge youth development research and practice.

Our Resource Reviews share valuable resources and keep JYD readers abreast of important developments in the field. Our invited Thought Leader Commentaries provide cutting-edge thinking on major issues by leading figures in the field. Our Forum section stimulates discussion and debate about important topics and emerging issues in the field of youth development. These sections are editor-reviewed though suggestions for resources to review and thought leaders to invite are most welcome.

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Understanding the Role of Summer Camps in the Learning Landscape: An Exploratory Sequential Study

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ABSTRACT

Summer camp is an important setting within the learning landscape of youth—a landscape that also includes school, sports, arts and music, religious settings, home, and eventually, work. While research on camp outcomes is abundant, practitioners and policymakers have little empirical evidence that summer camp participation offers long-term impact and value. The purpose of this study was to build on existing camp research to identify learning outcomes that are highly attributable to camp participation and to determine whether these outcomes are considered important in everyday life. A second purpose was to identify other settings that may contribute to learning outcomes often associated with camp participation. This study used mixed methods design and involved a national sample of 352 individuals (18-25 years old) who had attended camp for at least 3 weeks in their youth and had not worked at a camp. Alumni reported that the development of independence, perseverance, responsibility, appreciation for differences, and appreciation for being present were camp-related outcomes that were highly attributable to their camp experiences and that these outcomes were also of high importance in daily life. Among all outcomes that were highly attributable to camp, study participants noted that camp was a primary setting for developing affinity for nature, how to live with peers, leisure skills, a willingness to try new things, independence, being present, and empathy and compassion. School and home were primary learning settings for other outcomes. Findings from this study help identify where camp is particularly effective in promoting lasting outcomes and areas where camps may need more intentionality and resources.

Key words: *summer camp, learning settings, long-term outcomes*

Introduction

People learn, develop, and grow over their lives and across contexts and settings. Some of these settings within the learning landscape are distinct, while others inherently overlap. Settings can support lessons learned elsewhere or may offer contradictions or challenges to previous lessons. Summer camp is an important setting for learning and developing social and emotional learning skills (SEL), with an estimated 14 million youth attending camp in the United States each summer (American Camp Association, 2016). There is a need for more empirical evidence that summer camp participation offers long-term impact and value far beyond the experience, thereby adding to the existing body of literature on camp outcomes (e.g., Bialeschki, Henderson, & James, 2007; Garst, Gagnon, & Whittington, 2016; Henderson, Bialeschki, & James, 2007; Whittington & Garst, 2018; Wilson & Sibthorp, 2018). There is also a need for more research that examines how camp contributes to particular SEL outcomes as compared to other learning settings like school, home, sports, and other out-of-school-time activities.

Attaining nationally representative data on long-term learning from summer camp is difficult, largely due to the logistical challenges of accessing a large sample of previous campers' years after attending multiple summer camps in their youth. While an abundance of research has indicated that summer camps have near-term value to youth (e.g., Bialeschki et al., 2007) and studies have demonstrated the potential for long-term impacts with convenience samples of camp alumni (e.g., Garst et al., 2016), research on broader samples years after camp participation remains scarce.

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to examine how former camp participants believe their camp experiences influenced the development of camp-related outcomes and to compare camp to alternative learning settings for these outcomes. Findings will help practitioners to understand both camp's inherent developmental strengths and promising outcomes ripe for intentional focus.

Background

Out-of-school-time (OST) learning settings including extracurricular activities, organized sports, arts and music, youth groups, and summer-based activities like camp are important contributors to the growth of social and emotional learning (SEL), identity development, and the supports for positive youth development (Durlak, Weissberg, & Pachan, 2010; Fredricks & Eccles, 2006; Putnam, 2015; Vandell, Larson, Mahoney, & Watts, 2015). Camp can be defined as an organized set of activities led by trained leaders with intentional goals, often held in a unique learning environment like the outdoors (Henderson, Whitaker, Scanlin, & Thurber, 2007). The inherent nature of camp provides a rich setting for developing positive youth outcomes that support success in school and in life. Due to the wide variety of camp types and camp participants, as well as the difficulty of collecting data from large representative samples, it has been a challenge for researchers to clearly identify the core outcomes of camp as well as the salience of these outcomes in life outside of camp (e.g., Bialeschki et al., 2007; Sibthorp, Browne, & Bialeschki, 2010; Whittington & Garst, 2018).

Camp Research on Outcomes

Research on camp-related outcomes has a long history that dates back to studies in the early 20th century that looked at character development (Henderson, Bialeschki, & James, 2007) to more recent studies on the near-term impacts of camp participation (approximately a year or less following participation; Bialeschki et al., 2007) and the lasting impacts of camp within a single camp community (Whittington & Garst, 2018). Indeed, there is a rich literature base on camp outcomes, from studies focused on particular outcomes like sense of community and belonging (e.g., Goodwin, Lieberman, Johnston, & Leo, 2011;

Yuen, Pedlar, & Mannell, 2005) to studies focused on the unique outcomes of camps working with children with chronic illnesses or disabilities (e.g., Gillard, Witt, & Watts, 2011; Knapp, Devine, Dawson, & Piatt, 2015).

The research conducted by Bialeschki and colleagues (2007) and related studies (see Henderson, Whitaker, et al., 2007) included over 5000 campers and their parents from a national sample and examined a wide range of interpersonal and intrapersonal outcomes. Parents reported that their children demonstrated gains in several areas including self-esteem, independence, leadership, social comfort, and peer relationships in pre- to post-camp measures and that gains in these social-emotional learning domains were maintained at a 6-month followup (Bialeschki et al., 2007; Henderson, Whitaker, et al., 2007).

Other outcome studies looking at near-term outcomes of camp found outcomes similar to those identified by Bialeschki et al. (2007) with a few additions. For example, research on the camp setting found that camp was particularly good at supporting social connectedness among campers thereby increasing the social capital of participants (Yuen et al., 2005). Research on camps working with youth with disabilities or chronic illnesses have reported outcomes related to social acceptance, relief from stress, and self-efficacy for self-management of their condition (Gillard, Witt, & Watts, 2011; Knapp et al., 2015).

Retrospective studies on long-term camp outcomes are limited but provide some insight into what lessons from camp may carry over into adulthood. A study involving adults who attended camp as children identified camp-related outcomes within three broad categories: selfdetermined behavior (e.g., confidence, self-efficacy, friendships, initiative, competence), critical thinking, and physical well-being (Garst et al., 2016). Whittington and Garst (2018) examined how camp participation was related to skills associated with college readiness with a sample of alumni. Over 60% of alumni reported that camp helped them to “a great extent” to develop independence and self-reliance, teamwork skills, self-efficacy, confidence, leadership, selfregulation, and communication skills. Alumni also reported that the camp experience helped shape academic and career interests.

However, many of the studies of long-term camp outcomes have relied on convenience samples that could be overly biased toward camp experiences. For example, Garst and colleagues (Garst et al., 2016; Whittington & Garst, 2018) invited 350 camps to recruit alumni through email lists and Facebook, resulting in a sample of approximately 427 alumni responses solicited from an unknown number of camps; their sample was 97% white, 79% female, and ranged in age from 18 to over 75. More

representative samples (e.g., Bialeschki et al., 2007; Henderson, Whitaker, et al., 2007) did not examine the impact of camp participation into adulthood, or even beyond a year removed from camp. In addition, there is a need to understand how well camp-related outcomes apply in adult contexts like college and career and how camp contributes to SEL outcomes as compared to other learning settings (e.g., school, home, church, sports).

Therefore, the purpose of this study was to build on existing camp research to identify learning outcomes that are highly attributable to camp participation and to determine whether these outcomes are considered important in everyday life using a representative national sample. A second but related purpose is to identify other learning settings that may contribute to learning outcomes often associated with camp participation. More specifically, this study sought to answer the following research questions:

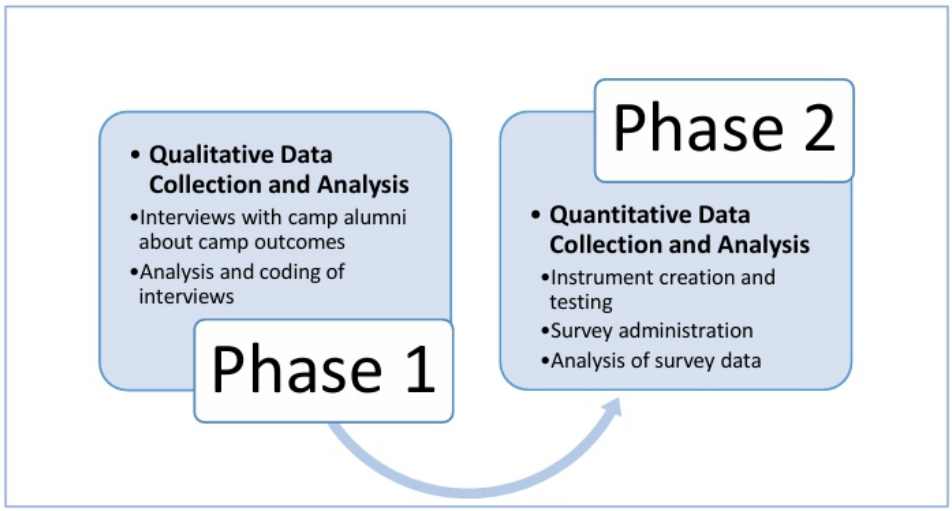
1. Which camp-related outcomes do camp alumni identify as highly attributable to the camp experience as compared to other camp-related outcomes?
2. Which camp-related outcomes do camp alumni identify as highly important to everyday life as compared to other camp-related outcomes?
3. Among camp alumni who identified given camp-related outcomes as highly attributable to their camp experiences, what was the primary learning setting for that outcome—
camp, home, school, work, organized sports, church or some other setting?

Findings from this study may help practitioners recognize the inherent strengths of the camp experience as well as identify promising areas of focus where intentional programming could increase the impact of camp on particular outcomes.

Methods

This study used a cross-sectional, exploratory sequential mixed methods design to address the research questions and examine the nature of learning from the camp experience. This study design involves qualitative data collection and analysis in the early phase followed by quantitative data collection and analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2011). For this study the qualitative phase (Phase 1) was used to identify outcomes that might be highly attributable to camp and important in daily life. The qualitative stage then informed instrument creation and quantitative data collection and analysis (Phase 2). Figure 1 describes how an exploratory sequential mixed-methods design was used in this study.

Figure 1. Exploratory Sequential Mixed Methods Design in This Study



Phase 1 Methods

Phase 1 involved 64 individuals between the ages of 16 and 23 (M = 18) who attended at least 3 weeks of camp in the United States during their youth. The sample included alumni from 22 camps from across the United States with the intention of representing the broad range of camps accredited by the American Camp Association. A stratified sample was selected from a list of volunteers collected by the American Camp Association to include a balance of alumni from residential overnight camps, day camps, religious affiliated camps, specialized camps for participants with particular needs (e.g., medical), and camps serving low-income participants. The sample was 78% female, 72% white, 9% African American, 9% multi-racial, 5% Hispanic or Latinx, and 5% undisclosed. Study participants had applied to work at camps but had not yet worked at a camp when they were interviewed. See Wilson, Akiva, Sibthorp, & Browne, 2019 for additional details on the methods and results of Phase 1.

Participants in Phase 1 were interviewed by phone using a semi-structured format during the spring of 2017. Interviewers asked participants about what they learned at camp and how they were able to apply areas of learning at camp to other areas of their lives. Follow-up questions allowed interviewers to gain greater insight into responses (Charmaz, 2014). Each interview took approximately 25 minutes to conduct.

Interviews were recorded, transcribed, and then coded independently by two researchers using descriptive, axial, and focused coding that identified themes and connections among these themes (Miles, Huberman, & Saldaña, 2014). Two researchers worked together to identify, refine, and verify themes. This coding resulted in 18 outcome areas associated with camp participation (see Table 1).

Table 1. Descriptions of Learning Outcomes Identified Through Qualitative Coding of Interviews

Learning outcome	Description
Willingness to try new things	*Attitude of receptivity to new ideas and experiences.*
Affinity for nature	*Appreciation for the natural world and nature.*
Independence	*Ability to function independently without reliance on family.*
Leisure skills	*Ability to participate in sport and/or recreation activities.*
Perseverance	*Ability to persevere in the face of challenges.*
Appreciation for differences	*Appreciation for different people and perspectives.*
Teamwork	*Ability to work as part of a team on a task.*
Being present	*An appreciation for being present in the moment, free of distractions, interacting with the world and others in an authentic way.*
Responsibility	*Willingness to be responsible for own behaviors.*
Leadership	*Ability to lead a group of peers to complete a task.*
Relationship skills	*Ability to form relationships with others.*
How to live with peers	*Ability to live in close quarters with peers.*
Self-confidence	*Confidence in abilities to be successful.*
Empathy and compassion	*Ability to empathize with others.*
Emotion regulation	*Ability to control emotions.*
Organization	*Ability to be organized.*
Self-identity	*Understanding of who I am and how I want to live my life.*
Career orientation	*Understanding of what to do for a career or in college.*

Phase 2 Methods

Following Phase 1 of this study, a survey instrument was designed. For Phase 2, a panel of youth development experts reviewed the retrospective questionnaire for content validity, ensuring the questionnaire accurately measured the intended constructs (i.e., the 18 learning outcomes from camp). The questionnaire was then piloted using 173 undergraduate students at a large public university in the United States. These participants offered feedback on question clarity and response options. Researchers reviewed pilot data to ensure variation and overall data quality. The questionnaire was further revised to improve the clarity of questions and response scales.

The final instrument consisted of questions in three main areas: (a) a 10-point rating scale assessing the role of camp in developing these outcomes, (b) a 10-point scale assessing the importance of learning outcomes in everyday life, and (c) a section where participants identified the primary setting for developing each outcome (camp, home, school, work, organized sports, church, or other). In addition to the closed-ended survey data reported in this paper, participants completed a series of screener questions

(e.g., weeks at camp and age) and provided qualitative responses to six open-ended questions; the qualitative responses were analyzed separately to inform different research questions. See Table 2 for example items for the data examined in this paper.

Table 2. Sample Items From Survey Instrument

Section 1	Camp was critical to my development of my willingness to try new things.	Very False Very True 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Section 2	In your daily life, how important is your willingness to try new things?	Least Important Most Important 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10
Section 3	In what setting did you primarily learn your willingness to try new things?	Camp; Home; School; Work; Organized Sports; Church; Other

Note. Similar questions were created for each of the learning outcomes. Additionally, if participants indicated a 9 or 10 on a 10-point scale for the questions in section 1, then conditional logic was used to display a corresponding question in section 3 about the primary setting in which that outcome was learned.

Sampling Procedures

Once the instrument was finalized, participants were recruited through an online panel provided by the research firm Qualtrics. An online panel is a database of individuals willing to participate in survey research if selected for the study (Callegaro et al., 2014). To participate in this study, respondents had to meet specific inclusion criteria in regard to age (i.e., 18-25 years old), camp participation (i.e., attended camp in their youth for at least three weeks in the United States), and work history (i.e., did not work at camp). Individuals who met the inclusion criteria subsequently filled out the questionnaire. Quotas were established through Qualtrics to ensure equal representation of male and female respondents. Participants were awarded an incentive for filling out the survey after their responses were verified for quality.

Data Analysis

The research team analyzed the data using descriptive statistics. First, means were calculated in each outcome area for camp's role in development and importance in everyday life. Second, means were then plotted along two axes. Two cut-points were established for each dimension: one from the grand mean of the importance of outcomes to everyday life (x-axis) and the other from the grand mean of the role of camp in the development of the outcome (y-axis). This approach is similar to a importance-performance

analysis used in a variety of research areas that helps identify areas of strength and opportunities for improvement in a given organization or industry (Martilla & James, 1977). This process resulted in four quadrants:

Quadrant I: Outcomes highly attributable to camp and of high importance in daily life.

Quadrant II: Outcomes less attributable to camp and of high importance in daily life.

Quadrant III: Outcomes highly attributable to camp and of less importance in daily life.

Quadrant IV: Outcomes less attributable to camp and of less importance in daily life.

Finally, responses that rated particular outcomes as highly attributable to camp (scores of 9 or 10) were analyzed to identify the primary learning setting for that outcome.

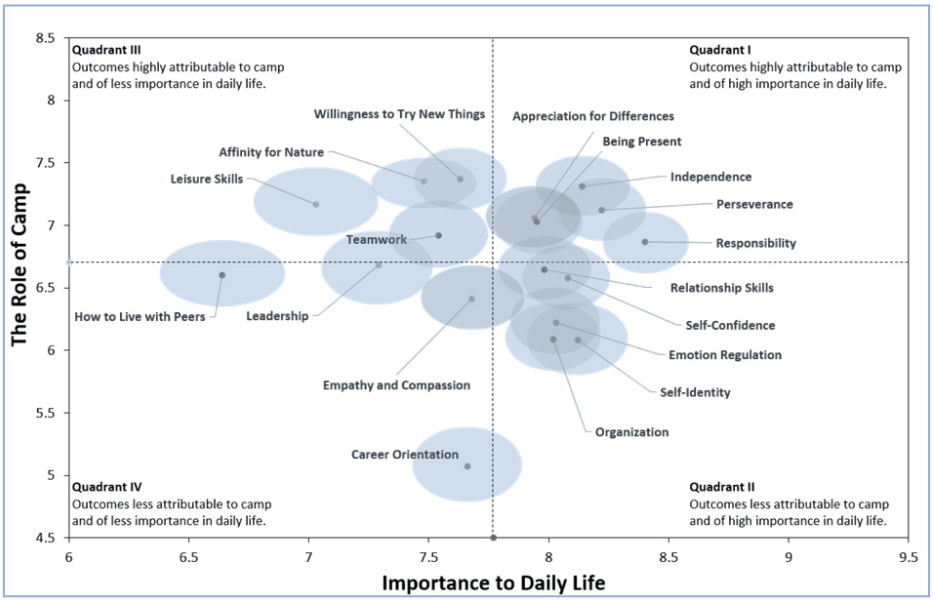
Results

The study included 352 usable responses from participants who had attended camp for at least 3 weeks as a camper and had not worked at a camp. Fifty-two percent identified as female and 1.1% identifying as gender non-conforming. Approximately 62.8% identified as White, 14.2% as African American, 9.4% were Hispanic or Latinx, 9.1% as multi-racial, 3.4% as Asian and 1.1% as other. For comparison, according to the U.S. Census Bureau (2019), the United States population in 2018 was 76.5% White, 13.4% African American, 18.3% Hispanic or Latinx, 2.7% multi-racial, 5.9% Asian, 1.3% American Indian or Alaska Native, and 0.2% Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander. Participants ranged from 18 to 25 (median age: 21), 99% held a high school degree and 81% had some college or more. On average, participants were approximately seven years removed from their last, or more recent, camp experience. When reporting on their last summer of camp experiences, 31% of respondents reported that they attended day camp, 43% had attended overnight camp, and 26% had attended both day and overnight camps. Among respondents, 13.4% reported that they participated in a counselor-intraining (CIT) or leader-in-training (LIT) program as campers.

Quadrant I: Outcomes Highly Attributable to Camp and of High Importance in Daily Life

Figure 2 presents how respondents rated the role of camp in the development of an outcome and the importance of the outcome in daily life. Participants identified appreciation for differences, being present, independence, perseverance, and responsibility as outcomes highly attributable to camp and highly important to their daily lives (see Quadrant I of Figure 2). The means for each of these outcomes were higher than the average of all means (grand means) for both the role of camp and importance in daily life.

Figure 2. The Role of Camp in Developing Transferable Learning Outcomes



Notes. The location of each learning outcome represents its mean for whether the outcome was highly attributable to camp (1 = very false, 10 = very true) and the mean of whether the outcome was considered important in everyday life (1 = least important, 10 = most important). The cut point on the x-axis is the grand mean of all outcomes for importance to daily life and the cut point on the y-axis is the grand mean of all outcomes for the role of camp. These cut points are used for relative comparisons. The translucent oval surrounding each point on the scatterplot represents the confidence interval for each learning outcome (95%). If a confidence interval for any outcome includes the mean of another outcome, the means are not statistically different.

Quadrant II: Outcomes Less Attributable to Camp and of High Importance in Daily Life

Outcomes less attributable to camp but still important to daily life (Quadrant II) included relationship skills, self-confidence, emotion regulation, self-identity, and organization. However, an examination of the confidence intervals indicates that both relationship skills and selfconfidence could arguably be categorized into Quadrant I.

Quadrant III: Outcomes Highly Attributable to Camp and of Less Importance in Daily Life

Leisure skills, affinity for nature, willingness to try new things, and teamwork fell into Quadrant III. These outcomes were highly attributable to camp but less important to daily life as compared to other outcomes.

Quadrant IV: Outcomes Less Attributable to Camp and of Less Importance in Daily Life

Outcomes in Quadrant IV included how to live with peers, leadership, empathy and compassion, and career orientation. These outcomes had means indicating that they were less attributable to camp and less important to their daily lives than other measured outcomes. Examination of confidence intervals in this quadrant show that how to live with peers and leadership could be categorized into Quadrant III and empathy and compassion and career orientation could be categorized into Quadrant II.

Caveats on Quadrant Classifications

As the cases above illustrate, an examination of the confidence intervals makes a definitive classification of some outcomes difficult. It is also important to note that the grand means for each dimension serve as the cut point along each axis. The cut point on the X-axis is the grand mean of all outcomes for importance to daily life and the cut point on the Y-axis is the grand mean of all outcomes for the role of camp. These cut points are used for relative comparisons. Because these cut points are dependent on the outcomes included and measured in the study, they should be interpreted collectively with the outcome-specific means and confidence intervals. Notably, as all the reported means exceed the scale midpoint of 5.5 (except for career orientation and the role of camp), participants reported both some role of camp in developing all the outcomes and some importance of all the outcomes in daily life. Table 3 summarizes the means of each learning outcome along each dimension.

Table 3. Means and Confidence Intervals of Learning Outcomes

	Attributable to camp			Importance in daily life		
		95% CI			95% CI	
Learning outcomes	*M*	*Lower*	*Upper*	*M*	*Lower*	*Upper*
Willingness to try new things	7.37	*7.12*	*7.62*	7.63	*7.44*	*7.83*
Affinity for nature	7.35	*7.08*	*7.62*	7.48	*7.26*	*7.70*
Independence	7.31	*7.05*	*7.56*	8.14	*7.94*	*8.34*
Leisure skills	7.17	*6.89*	*7.46*	7.03	*6.77*	*7.29*
Perseverance	7.12	*6.86*	*7.37*	8.22	*8.04*	*8.41*
Appreciation for differences	7.06	*6.81*	*7.32*	7.93	*7.74*	*8.13*
Being present	7.02	*6.76*	*7.29*	7.95	*7.77*	*8.14*
Teamwork	6.92	*6.65*	*7.19*	7.54	*7.34*	*7.75*
Responsibility	6.86	*6.61*	*7.13*	8.40	*8.22*	*8.58*
Leadership	6.67	*6.40*	*6.95*	7.28	*7.05*	*7.52*
Relationship skills	6.65	*6.39*	*6.91*	7.98	*7.79*	*8.18*
How to live with peers	6.59	*6.32*	*6.88*	6.64	*6.38*	*6.91*

Self-confidence	6.58	*6.31*	*6.85*	8.08	*7.89*	*8.27*
Empathy and compassion	6.40	*6.15*	*6.67*	7.68	*7.47*	*7.90*
Emotion regulation	6.22	*5.95*	*6.49*	8.02	*7.84*	*8.22*
Organization	6.09	*5.82*	*6.37*	8.02	*7.82*	*8.22*
Self-Identity	6.08	*5.79*	*6.37*	8.11	*7.91*	*8.33*
Career orientation	5.06	*4.76*	*5.37*	7.65	*7.43*	*7.89*
Grand mean	*6.70*			*7.77*		

Note. Table summarizes the means of each learning outcome along with the upper and lower bounds of a 95% confidence interval. The grand means for each dimension were used as cut points for plotting means in Figure 2.

Primary Learning Settings for Camp-Related Outcomes

Among participants who rated camp as highly critical to the development of particular outcomes (scores of 9 or 10), camp was the primary setting for the outcomes affinity for nature, how to live with peers, leisure skills, a willingness to try new things, independence, being present, and empathy and compassion (see Table 4).

Table 4. Primary Learning Settings for Camp-Related Outcomes

Outcome	Camp	Home	School	Work	Sports	Church	Other	Total
Affinity for nature	26.7%	6.0%	1.1%	1.4%	0.6%	1.7%	1.1%	38.6%
How to live with peers	15.6%	3.4%	4.5%	1.7%	0.9%	0.6%	0.3%	27.0%
Leisure skills	15.1%	3.1%	7.7%	0.9%	10.2%	0.6%	0.0%	37.6%
Willingness to try new things	14.5%	6.8%	7.7%	1.7%	2.3%	1.7%	1.1%	35.8%
Independence	15.1%	4.0%	8.5%	6.0%	2.3%	0.9%	0.6%	37.4%
Being Present	11.9%	4.5%	3.7%	1.7%	3.4%	3.7%	2.0%	30.9%
Empathy and compassion	6.5%	2.6%	6.3%	2.0%	1.1%	3.1%	0.0%	21.6%
Appreciation for differences	9.1%	1.7%	11.1%	3.1%	1.1%	3.1%	1.1%	30.3%
Leadership	7.1%	0.9%	7.7%	4.8%	2.6%	1.4%	0.9%	25.4%
Perseverance	9.1%	2.3%	12.5%	3.7%	5.1%	1.1%	0.8%	34.6%
Teamwork	8.2%	0.3%	11.4%	2.8%	6.0%	1.1%	0.3%	30.1%
Self-Identity	5.1%	6.5%	4.0%	2.0%	1.1%	2.3%	0.6%	21.6%
Relationship skills	5.4%	1.7%	11.1%	1.1%	2.6%	1.1%	0.0%	23.0%
Emotion regulation	4.3%	5.4%	5.1%	1.4%	2.6%	1.1%	0.0%	19.9%
Self-confidence	4.5%	5.7%	6.5%	4.3%	2.8%	1.4%	0.3%	25.5%
Career orientation	2.6%	2.3%	7.7%	1.4%	0.6%	0.0%	0.6%	15.2%
Organization	3.1%	4.8%	10.5%	2.0%	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%	21.8%
Responsibility	3.7%	11.6%	6.3%	3.4%	1.7%	0.9%	0.6%	28.2%

Note. The total column shows the percentage of respondents who reported that development of that outcome was highly attributable to camp (9 or 10; N = 352). These respondents were then asked to identify the primary learning setting for that outcome. Cells with a dark blue background indicate the learning setting with the highest frequency for a given outcome. Cells with a light blue background indicate other notable learning settings.

This same subset of respondents identified school as the primary setting for developing an appreciation for differences, leadership, perseverance, teamwork, relationship skills, selfconfidence, career orientation, and organization—even though participants initially rated camp as highly important to the development of these outcomes (9 or 10). Home was the primary setting where respondents developed self-identity, emotion regulation, and responsibility. Respondents also reported that work was also an important setting for learning independence, appreciation for differences, leadership, perseverance, self-confidence and responsibility. Sports was an important setting for learning leadership skills, being present, perseverance and teamwork. Church was recognized as another important setting where respondents learned empathy and compassion, an appreciation for differences, and an appreciation for being present.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to examine what former camp participants believed they learned at summer camp and identify which of these outcomes remained most salient into adulthood. The study also examined the role of camp experiences in development of key learning outcomes as compared to other learning settings. Findings show that camp was especially effective in promoting an appreciation for differences, being present, independence, perseverance, and responsibility, and that these outcomes were highly important in daily life. Camp was also a key learning setting for developing leisure skills, affinity for nature, willingness to try new things, and teamwork yet these outcomes were of less importance to daily life, though still important. Among respondents who rated outcomes highly attributable to camp, findings support that camp was the primary learning setting for developing affinity for nature, leisure skills, willingness to try new things, independence, and an appreciation for being present as compared to home, school, and other settings.

Contextualizing Outcomes Highly Attributable to Camp

Existing research has identified similar outcomes of camp participation, noting that camp is a setting where children and adolescents can develop important interpersonal and intrapersonal competencies (cf.

Bialeschki et al., 2007; Duerden et al., 2014; Garst & Ozier, 2015). This study provides additional insight as to how well camp outcomes transfer beyond camp while recognizing the contributions of other learning settings.

Intrapersonal skills like independence, perseverance, and responsibility have appeared consistently in camp literature as key outcomes of the camp experience, as has self-confidence which was near the cut point of outcomes deemed highly attributable to camp (Henderson, Whitaker, et al., 2007; Sibthorp et al., 2010; Whittington & Garst, 2018). One common aspect of camp—being away from home and family in a new social milieu—appears to support the development of these outcomes effectively. Indeed, the social norms of many camps set the expectation of personal responsibility and independence while providing a supportive environment to help youth manage difficulties like homesickness, interpersonal conflict, and other challenges and build general self-efficacy and confidence (Henderson, Bialeschki, Scanlin, et al., 2007). The findings from this study support the assertion that these skills are highly attributable to camp experiences and valuable later in life (see also: Olsen, Powell, Garst, & Bixler, 2018).

Camp has also been associated with the development of key interpersonal competencies like relationship skills and an appreciation for differences (Bialeschki et al., 2007; Garst & Ozier, 2015). Those findings are supported in this study. Camps provide opportunities for young people to encounter others—both campers and camp staff—who may be unlike people in their lives back home. This may be in terms of race, ethnicity, ability, beliefs, or experiences. Other studies have proposed that camp provides a "common ground" for individuals from different backgrounds to make deep connections (e.g., Yuen et al., 2005).

Making deep and authentic connections with others is closely related to another camp outcome identified as important to daily life, an appreciation for being present. Being present seems understandable as one of camp's main objectives is to engage participants deeply through play, novel activities, and meaningful connections with others (Duerden et al., 2014; Henderson, Bialeschki, & James, 2007). There are elements of the camp experience that support the ability to live in the moment, including being away from technology and the stresses of school and home life. Other studies have found that camp-like contexts support feelings of being present (Richmond, Sibthorp, Gookin, Annarella, & Ferri, 2018), mindfulness (Gillard, Roark, Nyaga, & Bialeschki, 2011), and provide opportunities for authentic interactions with others (Goodwin et al., 2011). Future studies may want to examine how camp experiences help participants seek out opportunities to disconnect from everyday life and live in the moment for the benefit of personal well-being.

Camp was also identified as a highly attributable learning setting for developing teamwork, a willingness to try new things, an affinity for nature, and specific leisure skills such as hiking, climbing, or sports. Again, these outcomes that have been tied to the camp experience in other research studies and this study support those findings (cf. Bialeschki et al., 2007; Henderson, Bialeschki, & James, 2007; Whittington & Garst, 2018; Yuen et al., 2005). However, this study found that these outcomes were less important to daily life relative to other outcomes. This may be because there are fewer opportunities to apply and practice these skills in everyday settings such as work, life, or school. It seems that camp is a ripe setting to connect with nature, try new things, work with others on a team, and develop specific leisure skills. Further, it is important to note that just because these outcomes were reported as less important to daily life as compared to other outcomes in this study, it does not mean that they are unimportant. Participants rated each of these outcomes at a 7 or higher on a scale of 10 for importance to daily life.

Promising Areas of Focus for Camps

For this study, the outcomes that were identified as highly attributable to camp and of high importance to daily life could be considered the most useful outcomes that camps, broadly speaking, inherently promote. While camps should continue to craft intentional programming and situations to promote these outcomes, it may be best to focus on programming to develop other outcomes central to the goals of individual camps, particularly those that were identified as important to daily life but less attributable to camps. In this study, these outcomes included organization, self-identity, emotion regulation, and to a lesser degree, self-confidence and relationship skills. Camps that want to increase their impact on these outcomes might benefit from having intentionally designed programs that support targeted outcome development. For example, organization was identified as a skill important in daily life, but camps may or may not explicitly emphasize organization at camp. From the findings in this study, organization is not a skill supported inherently by camp participation, at least as compared to other outcomes. Skillbuilding at camp, whether it be emotion regulation, relationship skills or organization, needs to be supported through curriculum, activities, and opportunities to practice to see results (Bialeschki et al., 2007; Duerden & Witt, 2010; Gestsdottir & Lerner, 2008).

Youth-serving organizations like camps should use self-assessment tools to guide programming and program improvement—tools that identify which outcomes should be targeted and how those outcomes can be achieved. Eccles and Gootman (2002) provide some guidance as to the program features that support positive youth development: physical and psychological safety, appropriate structure, supportive relationships, opportunities to belong, positive social norms, support for efficacy and

mattering, opportunities for skill building, and integration of family, school, and community efforts. Camp leaders can then consider the intended outcomes of programming to identify necessary program elements, short-term and long-term outcomes, data sources and performance measures to establish a "theory of change" (American Camp Association, 2007; McLaughlin & Jordan, 2010). A theory of change "is a way to explain the often unwritten or unconscious assumptions about the design and operation of camp programs" (American Camp Association, 2007, p. 19). This involves articulating how program goals and outcomes will be achieved and recognizing the various mechanisms that are involved between program delivery and the development of outcomes (Brousselle & Champagne, 2011). A theory of change can then inform a logic model which can guide both the program implementation and program evaluation process (Wells & Arthur-Banning, 2008). By using theories of change and logic models, camp leaders can target specific outcomes more strategically and make necessary adjustments to programming along the way.

Recognizing the Vast Learning Landscape

A distinct feature of this study was that it sought to understand how camp compared to other learning settings for these outcomes. Again, among those who rated outcomes as highly attributable to camp, camp was also identified as the primary learning setting for developing affinity for nature, leisure skills, willingness to try new things, independence, and an appreciation for being present. Notably, over a quarter of all respondents said that camp was a primary and essential setting where they developed an affinity for nature. This aligns with previous research on camp that noted camp's role in affording youth opportunities to explore and appreciate the natural world—opportunities that may not be as plentiful in other learning spaces (Henderson, Whitaker, et al., 2007). Perhaps more interestingly, even among those participants who rated camp as a highly important learning setting for an outcome, many still identified other learning settings like home, school, and sports as the primary learning setting for that same outcome. For example, school was identified as primary learning setting for appreciating differences, perseverance, teamwork, relationship, skills, and organization, among others. Home was a primary learning setting for responsibility, emotion regulation and selfidentity. This may not be a surprise as research on youth development identifies school and home as the central learning spaces for these outcomes as this is where youth spend the most time and have the most time to develop skills, their sense of identity, and future goals (Duckworth & Carlson, 2013; Nagaoka, Farrington, Ehrlich, & Heath, 2015; Shechtman, DeBarger, Dornsife, Rosier, & Yarnall, 2013). Camp can play a role in the development of these outcomes by providing a space for exploration and practice, but camp's influence may be limited in comparison to other learning settings.

Findings from this study reflect educational frameworks that recognize the complex interaction of factors within the learning landscape that influence youth development (cf. Bronfenbrenner & Morris, 2006; Nagaoka et al., 2015). While camp plays an important role for many outcomes, the influence of other learning contexts like home and school must be considered. Camp can be one of many positive developmental experiences that contribute to a healthy transition to adulthood.

By understanding the long-term impacts of camp and the relative importance of outcomes on daily life, practitioners may gain some insight as to which outcomes might need additional attention. There are some things that camp does inherently well while other outcomes may require more intentionality, resources, and time to yield lasting results. This is not to say that program staff should ignore the development of other skills as many of the outcomes from this study are intertwined. For example, organization and emotional regulation are integral to the development of independence, perseverance, and responsibility.

Future research may want to build on this retrospective study by using longitudinal designs to better understand how camp-related outcomes develop over time. This may involve identifying underlying learning mechanisms and how they contribute to specific learning outcomes. Camprelated research may also want to consider incorporating more ecological development approaches to understand more fully the role of camp in personal development within a system of other dynamic learning settings like home, school, work, and other contexts (see Nagaoka et al., 2015). Finally, future research could compare camp types and camp characteristics and their influence on valued and useful outcomes.

Limitations

This study had several limitations. First, while the panel sample provided a more diverse group of respondents with less inherent positive biases toward camp than a sample that may have included current camp staff, it included study participants who went to a variety of camps, from traditional residential camps and day camps to specialized camps. Grouping all these camp types together allowed the researchers to identify common long-term outcomes of camp, but such an approach may not accurately represent the unique strengths and weaknesses of a particular camp. Second, when comparing learning settings for camp-related outcomes, this study collected data only from study participants who reported that camp was especially impactful on a particular outcome. While this shortened the length of the survey to stave off survey fatigue, it provided less robust data about the relative importance of the settings. Third, the cross-sectional retrospective study is prone to some bias including non-response and recall bias that can affect findings. Finally, the generalizability of findings to the general population of

camp participants is unclear, though findings do generalize back to existing theory and research.

Conclusion

This study reaffirms that camp is an important learning setting and that many of the outcomes associated with camp participation last into adulthood. Perhaps more importantly, this study identified outcomes that were both highly attributable to camp and highly important in the daily lives of camp alumni as compared to other areas of learning. Camp appears to be especially good at fostering the development of prized outcomes such as an appreciation for differences, being present, independence, perseverance, and responsibility. This reinforces other research (Bialeschki et al., 2007; Henderson, Whitaker, et al., 2007; Whittington & Garst, 2018) that identified that the inherent nature of camp—a novel environment away from home with new social groups, norms, and customs—is one that offers a fertile setting for learning and personal growth among youth.

Yet there is more research to be done on the lasting influence of camp and the role of other learning settings. This study revealed that camp contributes to the development of important and useful outcomes while also acknowledging the central role of other learning settings like home, work, school, sports, and church. The developmental trajectories of youth are complex and multifaceted with key learning experiences occurring across many different settings. Future research will need to examine how these experiences and learning settings interact over time to contribute to the development of outcomes associated with camp.

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University of California 4-H Latino Initiative: Experiences of Bicultural and Bilingual Staff

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A B S T R A C T

We report data from the first year of an initiative to engage Latino youth and families in the 4-H Youth Development Program, managed by the University of California. Through qualitative questionnaires and focus group interviews, we analyzed experiences of 6 new bilingual and bicultural program staff, hired specifically to implement youth development programming to reach Latino youth. Staff reported a steep learning curve, with competing demands to build relationships, engage youth, and show results. Lessons learned may help shape activities that other youth development programs may consider in similar efforts.

Key words: *Latino youth development, diversity initiative*

Introduction

Youth participation in community-based youth development programs (YDP) is a prevailing cultural norm in the United States. Participation in YDPs has been shown to improve selfesteem, academic performance, empathy and caring, leadership skills, and civic engagement (Scales, Benson, Leffert, & Blyth, 2000; National Research Council and Institute of Medicine, 2002). However, many YDPs that formed at the turn of the 20th century have primarily served youth from dominant social groups and been less successful serving marginalized youth, youth of color, or youth from non-dominant social groups (Russell & Van Campen, 2011). The United States will become more racially and ethnically diverse, particularly with an increase in Latino population over the next 50 years (Panzar, 2015). Engaging Latino youth in YDPs will require institutional changes and professional support in order to provide culturally relevant programs. One strategy to accelerate successful change may be hiring bilingual and bicultural staff who are able to involve Latino youth in YDPs.

Latino Youth Development

The research-based literature on Latino participation in YDPs is limited. Erbstein and Fabionar (2014) argued, “the emergent state of the research and the complexity of the U.S. Latin@ populations present

challenges to assembling a cohesive, fully assessed set of practices in relationship to outcomes" (p. 23). There is a small body of empirical work to identify promising practices in Cooperative Extension, a partnership among the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA), land grant universities, and local governments (USDA, 2016), rooted in strengthening intercultural competence and confronting institutionalized racism.

Gregory et al. (2006) reasoned that youth organizations could not expect "their traditional volunteer models to work well with Latino populations, particularly where those models depend on tightly defined roles or formal organizational structures." They found more success with organizations that had flexible and informal roles, organized collectively, and emphasized "helping out" rather than "leading." Relationship building was critical, and "nurturing a sense of connectedness" did not have shortcuts. When initiating new programs, Gregory et al. recommended working closely with potential program participants to determine needs, emphasizing collective and personal benefits, and designing programs with multiple entry points.

One of the first statewide 4-H Latino outreach efforts was Oregon State University's 4-H Latino Outreach Project (Hobbs & Sawer, 2009). University personnel provided professional development and technical assistance to local staff who engaged the Latino community through 4-H programming. One significant factor contributing to success was having bilingual and bicultural 4-H staff in local communities for at least three years. Lessons learned with regard to staff included (a) difficulty finding individuals with skills in youth development willing to work for the pay typically offered by large Universities, (b) mismatch between staff's professional goals and the goals of 4-H, (c) supporting staff in learning about 4-H and the design and implementation of youth development programs, and (d) establishing a respectful and accepting office environment. The final report summarizes lessons learned from the organizational perspective from state staff, but not necessarily from the voices of the staff hired to do the work. The report is unclear on its data sources; however, it appears that while state staff may have spoken with local staff throughout the project, there was not a systematic method to collect and analyze local staff experiences.

Overall, while reports containing research and practical wisdom offer recommendations of promising practices for engagement of Latino youth in YDPs (e.g., Gregory et al., 2006; Hobbs & Sawer, 2009), there is less written about the experience of onboarding new staff and tasking them with program development. YDPs rely on the skills of youth professionals and volunteers who design and deliver programs for young people (Walter & Grant, 2011). Thus, as Walter and Grant (2011) affirm, "staff performance of youth professionals is a key component in the success of youth programs." In order to be

successful in increasing Latino participation in YDPs, staff must rethink recruiting processes, adapt their programs, and approach the Latino community with a holistic cultural perspective (Fábregas Janeiro & Horrillo, 2017). The purpose of our qualitative case study was to learn what six new bilingual and bicultural staff reported contributed to successes and challenges of navigating the organization, initiating relationships with the community, and implementing youth development programming.

4-H Youth Development Program

The 4-H Youth Development Program is administered by Cooperative Extension. Extension's purpose is to cultivate University–community partnerships using community based research, collaborative problem solving, and stewarding community coalitions (Maley, Chen, & McCarthy, 2014). The University of California 4-H YDP's mission is to engage youth in reaching their fullest potential while advancing the field of youth development (4-H Mission and Direction Committee,2003). Until recently, 4-H programs did not represent the racial and ethnic diversity found in California's population of young people, aged 5 to 18; nonetheless, serving marginalized youth in 4-H youth development programs is vital to growth of Cooperative Extension programming (Fábregas Janeiro, 2017). As Smith and Soule (2016) noted, "as a program designed for and by those rooted in European American culture, the 4-H YDP was not founded in the culture-specific knowledge of diverse individuals and groups currently living in areas that these programs serve" (p. 30). For example, in the 2014-2015 school year, University of California 4-H served 73,246 youth, with 24,042 youth identifying as Hispanic/Latino (State 4-H Office, 2017). Thus, only 33% of participating youth members identified as Hispanic/Latino while 54% of K-12 youth in California identified as Hispanic/Latino (Ed-Data, 2017). Additionally, state and local staff did not represent the population served with more than 90% of staff identifying as non-Hispanic White. Recognizing these disparities as the result of institutionalized systems, California 4-H initiated efforts to better serve and engage Latino youth and families (Moncloa et al., 2018).

University of California 4-H Latino Initiative

In 2015, California 4-H YDP initiated a pilot effort to develop culturally relevant and responsive youth development programs (built on work from Gay, 2010; Ladson-Billings, 2014) to welcome Latino youth, families, and volunteers to 4-H. Six counties were identified as having high need to reach Latino youth with 4-H (see Table 1). While these six counties were new to this work, a seventh (Santa Barbara) had ongoing efforts and served in a support role, thus we only report on the experiences of the new staff hired in the six selected counties. Six new 4-H staff were recruited and oriented to the organization. These staff were primarily responsible for assessing interests, resources, and needs within their counties;

offering training for new volunteers; implementing new programs; and marketing and public relations targeting new audiences. All six staff identified as Latino, and all but one of the supervisors for these new staff were nonHispanic White (4 White male, 2 White female, 1 Latina female) with a secondary supervisor, the state 4-H assistant director for diversity and expansion (Latina female).

Table 1. University of California 4-H Latino Initiative: Latino Participants in 4-H Before and After Year 1

County	New staff	Youth population	Percentage of Latino youth	Latinos in 4-H before Year 1	Latinos in 4-H after Year 1
Kern	Latina	181,393	65%	20%	55%
Merced	Latino	57,477	72%	23%	29%
Monterey	Latina	76,768	78%	25%	37%
Orange	Latina	493,030	49%	33%	45%
Riverside	Latina	427,537	63%	20%	47%
Sonoma	Latino	71,131	45%	13%	23%
Statewide		6,226,737	54%	33%	45%

Note. Youth population and Latino population numbers from the 2015-2016 school year obtained from Ed-Data, 2017. 4-H Youth numbers from the 2014-2015 and 2015-2016 school years obtained from California State 4-H office, 2017.

Methodology

We utilized a multiple methods qualitative study involving a qualitative monthly effort reporting questionnaire and a year-end focus group interview. Participants were the six new staff, two who identified as Latino and four who identified as Latina; all were bilingual in English and Spanish, bicultural, and familiar with Latino cultures. Five were young professionals and one was mid-career.

Data collection was designed to elicit information relevant to the goals of the University of California 4-H Latino Initiative, including efforts to assess community needs, practices in program implementation, and program effectiveness. The first data source was a qualitative questionnaire to collect staff reports on their monthly efforts (Qualtrics, 2017). The questionnaire contained seven open-ended text box questions; e.g., "Report on your efforts to initiate, develop, establish, and strengthen relationships." From February to June 2017, 25 responses were collected from the six participants. The second data source was a focus group interview conducted at the end of the first year (Krueger & Casey, 2015). The protocol contained six primary stems with several sub-questions; e.g., "We will now focus on practices in program implementation that reaches Latino youth, families, and volunteers; How did you go about

selecting, designing, and adapting programs? How did you make the decision regarding program models or delivery modes?" Five of the six staff participated in the focus group interview. An academic colleague not associated with the Latino Initiative facilitated the focus group interview; it was recorded (147 minutes), and transcribed.

We four authors supervised one staff member each. We strove to navigate this dual-role as researcher and supervisor carefully and with transparency. The study was conducted under the purview of the University of California, Davis Institutional Review Board. From the hire date, staff were informed that they would be asked to provide information helpful in identifying promising practices to reach Latino communities and advance the research base on culturallyresponsive youth development. The monthly questionnaires and focus group interview were voluntary. Additionally, supervisors responded to staff's concerns and challenges, as well as acknowledged their successes. Nonetheless, this situation was a limitation because participants may have responded knowing their immediate supervisor was involved in this study.

We analyzed data with deductive thematic analysis, a qualitative method used to identify patterns in the data (Braun & Clarke, 2006). The first and second authors analyzed the focus group interview transcript while the third and fourth authors analyzed data collected from the monthly questionnaires. Each researcher individually coded their respective data source, segmenting data into one of the three pre-determined categories (learning the organization, building relationships, and implementing programming). In pairs, we utilized consensus to identify emergent patterns within the segmented text within each category. The use of multiple analysts for each data source strengthened the rigor of our analysis (Patton, 2015). Once all data was analyzed, the first and second authors cross checked and organized emerging themes between the two qualitative data sources (Patton, 2015). We conducted member checks (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016) and staff indicated that the thematic summaries accurately reflected their experiences.

Findings

Findings were organized into three categories. Staff from each of the counties reported learning about the organization, initiating and/or strengthening partnerships with the community, and implementing new youth development programming. The Initiative permitted flexibility in program models and curriculum, within organizational frameworks, to meet the needs of local Latino youth and families. By the end of the program year, every county 4-H YDP demonstrated an increase in Latino youth involvement in their respective 4-H programs, and an increase in the proportion of Latino 4-H youth (see

Table 1).

Learning About 4-H: Orienting New Bilingual, Bicultural Staff

Staff reported a steep learning curve both in learning about the 4-H YDP and about their new communities. Four of the six had moved to a new geographic area for their new position. New staff, even those with previous youth development experience, experienced a steep learning curve with regards to navigating the 4-H YDP, its history, multiple levels of oversight (U.S.D.A., U.C., county government), and emphasis on program model flexibility. Asked about her initial approach to the work, one participant said, "My approach to reaching out to the Latino community has been primarily, well first to learn about the 4-H program, since it was new to me, and second, to partner with existing youth serving organizations in the county." The program model options and multiple content areas and curricula hindered new staff in understanding the core emphasis of the 4-H YDP, let alone initiating conversations with community partners about what 4-H has to offer them. Staff reported needing training in 4-H program delivery options, 4-H's model of positive youth development, and training specific to bridging dominant-cultural program models and adapting programs to fit Latino youth and families. On top of learning job functions, organizational culture, four staff were new to their area and had a dual task of integrating with the community. During the year-end focus group interview, when asked about their first-year experience one staff said: "I'm still seeing what works and what doesn't. . . . I'm new to the county, and I don't know, well, I especially [when I] started out I didn't know anyone."

While the position descriptions for each of the staff were identical on paper, we found variance across the counties in how each job functioned. Part of this may have been due to varying community needs as well as priorities emphasized by the staff members' respective supervisor. This variance, however, also made it more challenging for staff to support one another in learning about the 4-H YDP. For example, the use of specific program models varied; some staff implemented 4-H after-school clubs, others started SPIN (special interest) clubs, and one relied on a partner organization to reach youth. Three staff had existing funds to support new programs, while the others had to initiate early fundraising activities to support their programs.

Learning About the Community and Developing Relationships

Staff emphasized the value of their bilingual and bicultural nature in developing relationships, and engaging youth, families, and community organizations. Staff reported targeting locations (and organizations) that served predominately Latino youth in areas where the 4-H YDP had little or no existing presence. However, not having a presence made early connections difficult. In early efforts,

staff found barriers for 4-H to enter these spaces. “People have never heard of us, they don't even know we exist. . . . People are going to just say, ‘Oh no, we have enough programming here. We have an after-school program.’”

To overcome this challenge, staff reported having the most success with organizations that had either a pre-existing personal connection or an established relationship with the University of California or 4-H YDP. When asked about successful partnerships, one staff mentioned linking with colleagues who managed the CalFresh Healthy Living, UC program (USDA SNAP-Ed programming providing nutrition education related to healthy eating and physical activity): Through UC CalFresh, we met this organization, starting summer of last year, called the Community Settlement Association. That's where we … had the first bilingual 4-H Club after-school clinic. That has been successful because they are very open to youth programming that we bring to 4-H. They already had that trust built in from UC CalFresh. We came in, sort of through the door, with an already established relationship, sort of like in addition to. We've been there since then.

Another staff member learned about this and connected with their local UC CalFresh staff: “They'd [partner organizations] feel like they could trust me to come and speak to their parents just because they know that I work with [UC] CalFresh.”

Staff reported early success in relationship-building by offering 4-H educational programs to schools, after-school programs, other traditional YDPs, and culturally-based organizations (e.g., Univision, Mexican Consulate). A staff spoke about approaching parent groups in schools: “Some of the relationships that I've established, that are very useful, are school districts. Where I'm able to get to know who the key player is for the parent organization.”

There was generally more success in school-based relationships (in- or after-school) and YDPs, but less so in approaching governmental-based programs. Staff reported that some organizations were not interested; either because, as one participant said, “They're doing their own thing. They're kind of worrying about their own stuff” or they felt like they did not need anything 4-H had to offer. The staff member went on to say emails and phone calls did not garner response, that “meeting in person is where you start seeing people are following through.” Multiple staff described how being patient and persistent aided in their efforts.

Program Implementation: Serving Latino Youth

The goals for the 4-H Latino Initiative were to engage more Latino youth in the 4-H YDP so that 4-H

YDP so that 4-H better served all youth populations in the area. Overall, staff reported early success by adding 4-H activities to existing programs where Latino audiences are already present rather than attempting to integrate Latino youth in existing 4-H Clubs.

Challenges Reported by Staff

There were three primary challenges reported by staff: (a) barriers to integrating Latino youth into existing 4-H Club programming, (b) organizational policies, and (c) limited funds to implement new programs. Early in the Initiative, staff began to learn about 4-H by attending existing 4-H Clubs—many of which had been in existence for decades—but generally described unwelcoming atmospheres and cultural norms. One staff said "It's like a sink or swim environment, in some of these clubs. Where somebody, a new family comes, and nobody really explains anything to them." Another staff member agreed with this assessment in their own site observations.

I went to visit the clubs myself. So I did not feel the love, myself, as a [staff] going to those club meetings. I can see that the only Latino kid in the club, and this is the most inclusive club in ___ County. . . it wasn't a welcoming environment . . . we struggle a lot with the traditional base and there's a lot of pushback on this Latino Initiative, because they see 4-H as their baby and how they have to protect it from anybody that wants to change it.

While fully integrating the 4-H YDP is an ongoing concern for 4-H program leadership, staff were expected to engage new youth immediately, and thus, found more success by implementing new program models targeted to Latino youth. In the meantime, staff reported focusing only on communicating to traditional 4-H Clubs, rather than leverage, to engage Latino youth.

Another challenge was 4-H policies acting as barriers, including establishing memorandums of understanding with partnering organizations, chartering 4-H Clubs, and the adult volunteer enrollment process. Staff described the need for policies and procedures to be streamlined and made friendly for non-White audiences. The adult volunteer enrollment process was a critical challenge, with concerns around fees, background checks, and an English-only online orientation process. A participant emphasized the volunteer enrollment process posing a barrier to recruitment, "Working with policies, again it's been really hard. The chartering process, fingerprinting, parent, and then the fear of the volunteer process."

A third challenge was lack of funding to implement programs, purchase curriculum and supplies,and cover 4-H enrollment fees. While the University of California committed employment funds for the

Initiative, there was no funding allocated for program implementation. One staff member expressed early frustration in lack of funds:

Where is the support for this new program that you all want to see happen? I can't just magically make it happen. That's kind of how I felt. I was told to increase the enrollment of Latinos, and starting programs for Latinos, but it was like it was going to be magic.

While limited funds might have reduced the potential for high-quality and successful programming, one positive benefit, at least in two counties, was that it promoted partnerships to leverage resources, for example collaborating with UC CalFresh.

Staff emphasized that getting to know the community and building relationships were the most important parts of starting a new 4-H program. Staff identified several 4-H program models they utilized to engage Latino youth in 4-H; these included after-school clubs, SPIN clubs, inschool clubs, day camps, and short-term/special interest programs. Within each, content and curriculum varied around science/engineering, health/nutrition, and civic engagement; all implemented using culturally responsive practices. When asked how they made decisions about which program model to implement, most replied that they used data such as parent or youth surveys and let the community decide. As one staff member explained: “We gather people together, refresh their minds on the [4-H] delivery modes and let them decide which is best for their community. They know the community better than I would.”

Additionally, while some staff reported challenges recruiting adults to serve as volunteer leaders, others utilized teenagers to facilitate programming and act as role models. Utilizing teenagers in this way reduced the number of adult volunteers needed while also engaging Latino adolescents in the 4-H YDP in a developmentally appropriate role. Three counties employing the teenagers-as-teachers model found that this strategy met 4-H learning objectives and reduced the number of adult volunteers they needed to recruit, screen, and orient. Another approach was to identify organizations that already had volunteers and provide 4-H training. Overall, staff implemented new programming, using a variety of program models reaching Latino youth. All six counties were able to increase the number of Latino youth served by the end of the year.

Discussion

Lessons Learned

The 4-H YDP has a long history in the United States providing youth development and experiential education to young people. While serving predominately non-Hispanic White youth, our University of California 4-H Latino Initiative was an attempt to design, implement, and adapt programming to serve Latino youth and families in six California counties. Specific to 4-H, we learned that multiple delivery modes (e.g., after-school 4-H clubs, special interest [SPIN] clubs) were successful in engaging Latino youth and not just the traditional 4-H community club model. Additionally, we learned that staff needed support to learn and navigate the 4-H culture. Furthermore, 4-H around the United States has the potential to leverage relationships with other Cooperative Extension programs to expand its reach.

The experiences shared by our six new bilingual and bicultural staff demonstrated positive benefits of being able to speak the language of the population the initiative sought to reach. These benefits included improved ability to form relationships, communicate more easily with parents, and navigate community norms. Additionally, the staff who had previously lived in the communities in which they then served realized earlier success in understanding the community's values and interests; e.g., celebrating Mexican Independence Day, using soccer to attract youth. Furthermore, as supervisors, we observed anecdotal evidence for the advantages of hiring staff who understood the culture and the language of the communities they were tasked to serve; e.g., staff's ability to form relationships with the Latino community more quickly than those of us who were non-Hispanic White had experienced previously.

Recommendations

The experiences shared from the bicultural and bilingual program staff can help shape activities that other YDPs and institutions may consider in similar efforts. First, supervisors and leadership should be prepared to support new staff in learning both the organizational culture and developing a realistic plan-of-work in order to balance staff time developing knowledge of the target community and knowledge of the organization. Additionally, although program model flexibility aids in being responsive to unique community needs, supervisors should be intentional in agreeing on initiative-wide priorities so that staff can build a community of practice. Second, supervisors should recognize that building social capital is as important as skill development when staff are tasked with increasing diversity. Developing relationships and trust takes time, so organizational leadership should plan for personnel to spend significant time building relationships before expecting to see significant increases in youth numbers reached.

Third, leverage collaborations with internal and external programs that have successful relationships with target populations. Supervisors should work intentionally with their staff to map the local ecosystem of Latino YDPs, including identifying gatekeepers, in order to help establish priorities.

Overall, staff found easier and faster success bringing new education or curriculum to schools and other YDPs that serve Latino youth than trying to bring Latino youth into existing programming. To assist in these efforts, staff would likely benefit from training in how to engage gatekeepers (i.e., an elevator speech, know the why, understand resources your organization can bring).

Finally, staff should be empowered to suggest ways to overcome organizational procedures that may serve as barriers to participation by targeted youth populations. The process of increasing diversity takes time and commitment to building new relationships, support for developing meaningful programs, and a willingness to change as an organization.

Limitations

Our study has several limitations. First, our data set relied on the perceptions from staff themselves, without triangulation from others, such as supervisors, colleagues, or youth participants. Second, since supervisors were also researchers, participants may not have felt comfortable sharing all challenges. Third, the six counties included in our study were selected for their readiness to expand programming, and thus, there may be additional opportunities or challenges in locations that were not included in the pilot project. Fourth, we did not assess differing types of institutional support within each county. This could have had a mediating effect on staff success. Fifth, our analysis was conducted only in relation to 4-H programming and did not include a broader look at institutional settings.

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Life Skill Development and Financial Impact Associated With a Youth Livestock Sales Program

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A B S T R A C T

The Sale of Junior Champions is a premier livestock auction and youth scholarship program held at Dixie Nationals as a part of Mississippi's junior livestock program. The sale is open to 4-H and FFA members who qualified their livestock at the annual Dixie National Junior Round-Up. While youth livestock sales programs are commonly found at state and county fairs throughout the United States, demographic information and information concerning financial and life skill impacts of the program on participants is limited. Therefore, a survey instrument for the 2018 sale was designed to determine how the event has impacted the financial burden of continued education and life skill development of youth participants. Paper and electronic surveys were distributed during and after the event. Responses (n = 176) reflected a diverse group of participants including 4-H/FFA members (22%), parents of youth (22%), volunteers (21%), Extension employees/FFA advisors (22%), sale buyers/sponsors (12%), and others (2%). Most participants (45%) were older (40-60 years old). Almost half of the respondents (43%) had attended the sale 6 or more times, while 10% were first-time attendees. A driving force for attendance appeared to be the scholarships as 33% received or had a youth receiving a scholarship. Program participation promoted improvement in all life skills measured. Future educational goals in youths were reported to be positively impacted by sale participation ($p < 0.001$). Understanding of sale participant demographics and financial and life skill impacts will assist in program justification, future program growth, and identifying groups where participation can be strengthened.

Key words: *youth scholarship programs, livestock sales, youth life skills, 4-H, FFA*

Introduction

Youth programs such as 4-H and FFA were established decades ago in order to help youth continue to develop various life skills (Lockman, 2017). These programs are designed to engage youth through hands-on learning in a non-traditional manner. Involvement in 4-H and FFA programs gives youth the ability to take on the responsibility of their own project to gain skills and knowledge that will benefit them as young adults (Ward, 1996; Goodwin, 2010; Rose et al., 2016).

Youth livestock sales programs are not uncommon throughout the United States as they can be found at most state and county fairs each year (Kreutz, 2013). As for Mississippi, the Dixie National Junior Round-Up (DNJR) is the premier junior market animal show where youth exhibit market animals from which the Champion and Reserve Champion animals are selected to be auctioned through the Sale of

Junior Champions (Jousan, 2018). Both 4-H and FFA contestants exhibit their livestock in the largest junior market livestock show in Mississippi. The Champions and Reserve Champions of the Junior Market steer, lamb, swine, Mississippi bred barrow, and goat shows are singled out for a special tribute at the Dixie National Livestock Show and are eligible for the Sale of Junior Champions. The number animals that qualify for the sale range between two and 12 animals per Junior Market Show. In addition to these animals, if they are not one of the regular show Champions or Reserve Champions, the Overall Grand and Reserve Grand Champion Mississippi bred market steers, lambs, and goats are eligible for the sale with two animals per type of livestock qualifying. Thus, a total of 42 to 48 animals typically qualify for the Sale of Junior Champions.

This sale has steadily grown over the last 49 years, having grossed over $100,000 in sales for 24 years consecutively and generating $6.89 million in total sales. In addition, the scholarship program has grown from awarding a single $1,000 scholarship 26 years ago to having provided a total of $832,700 in scholarship funds to support the education of Mississippi youth (Jousan, 2018). When the exhibitor's animal is sold, he or she receives 75% of the sale price of their animal. The Sale of Junior Champions committee retains 25% of the sale price, which is then used for scholarship funds (20%) and for expenses such as promotion of the sale (5%). The following are the three different ways a youth may be rewarded a scholarship: (a) be a senior in high school that did not have an animal qualify for the sale, (b) be a winner of the Premier Exhibitor Contest, or (c) have a Supreme Breeding Animal.

High school seniors that show livestock at Dixie Nationals, but do not qualify an animal for the sale have an opportunity to win a $1,500 scholarship. In 2018, the committee presented 39 youth with these scholarships totaling $58,500. To be eligible, youth have to show an animal at that year's DNJR (breeding or market animal). They submit an application with the following aspects of the application weighted accordingly in the scholarship selection: financial need (35%); involvement in animal projects (35%); education/grades (15%); and overall impression (15%). Three members of the Sale of Junior Champions committee score the applications and determine which youths are deserving of these scholarships.

On the other hand, winners of the Premier Exhibitor Scholarship are youths who submit an application in whatever species they show (beef cattle, dairy cattle, meat goat, dairy goat, sheep, and/or swine), go through questions at stations that pertain to their species, take an exam, go through an interview, and then earn points in showmanship and with their animal in its respective class while showing. These scholarships are $2,000 each. It is possible that a winner of the Premier Exhibitor Scholarship could have a Supreme Animal too, and thus, could win two scholarships.

Supreme Animal Scholarship winners earn $1,500 for earning a supreme title. These breeding animals are not included in the sale. The title of Supreme Champion in one of the following categories earns a youth exhibitor this scholarship: beef heifer, beef bull, dairy cattle female, senior dairy goat female, commercial beef heifer, and commercial meat goat doe.

While these scholarship opportunities are attractive to high school age youths as they start their college search, the benefits of these programs go beyond financial impact (Kreutz, 2013). 4-H and FFA programs provide an outlet for youth to experience a plethora of exciting, yet educational opportunities that assist in building life skills (Ward, 1996; National 4-H Council, 2013; Harris, Stripling, Stephens, & Loveday, 2016). Youth are presented with choices of projects and activities to participate in such as youth livestock sales programs so that they may explore various areas of interest as they build these skills. Previous research has revealed that 4-H program participation has impacted life skill development and has prepared young adults to succeed (Ratkos & Knollenberg, 2015). Furthermore, a study by Boleman, Cummings, and Briers (2004) revealed that parents of youth that were involved in 4-H livestock projects noticed enhancement of life skill development related to participation. The longer children were involved in their projects, the more likely the children were to develop important skills for life.

Nevertheless, participation is a limiting factor for these youth programs to flourish, and with the ever-changing diversity within the population being recruited for these programs, recruitment becomes even more challenging today (LaVergne, 2013; Martin & Kitchel, 2014). Furthermore, along with the difficulty of recruitment, events such as a youth livestock sales program require a large amount of planning, organizing, and monetary input. Thus, it is necessary to ascertain the value and effect that programs such as the sale have on youth participants, family members, and community members. This information helps committee members and/or event organizers evaluate the efficacy of the program and determine its value, outside of just dollars and cents, and how it may be changed for the better.

In the end, while participation numbers and scholarship dollars are recorded for these programs, to date, documentation of the types and extent of participation associated specifically with youth livestock sales programs and the impact of this type of program on youth and others involved with these events are lacking. Therefore, the objective of this study was to examine participation and the broader impacts of a youth livestock sales program, the Sale of Junior Champions, through the application of a survey instrument.

Methods

Survey Participants

The Sale of Junior Champions is held annually at the Dixie National Junior Round-Up. The 2018 sale was held in Jackson, Mississippi during the month of February. Youth livestock exhibitors for the sale included both 4-H and FFA members. Along with youth sale exhibitors, other 4-H and FFA members attended the sale to receive scholarships associated with the youth livestock sales program. In addition, sale attendees included buyers of the sale animals, sale sponsors, parents of youth exhibitors and/or scholarship recipients, sale volunteers, faculty and staff associated with Mississippi State University, and local community members. Sponsors of the sale were defined as those businesses or individuals who were not buyers of sale animals, but donated funds directly to the scholarship program. These monies were 100% transferred to the scholarship program, and then were combined with a 20% commission taken from the sale of each animal. Buyers were defined as individuals and businesses that put forth money toward the purchase of a sale animal at the auction. Exhibitors were those youth that qualified a Champion or Reserve Champion animal. Exhibitors could have qualified multiple animals in the same species or across species in the same year. Exhibitors were, however, limited in how many animals were shown. They could have three market animals per species as long as one animal was Mississippi bred.

During the 2018 Sale of Junior Champions, paper copies of the survey were distributed to all sale participants and attendees in which survey participants were allowed to complete the survey throughout the duration of the event. A booth was set up at the entrance of the auction facility where the sale took place. Mississippi State University employees handed out the paper survey at the booth and answered questions about the sale and the survey. The booth was staffed by at least two employees for at least 30 minutes before and after the sale and during the sale. Survey participation was voluntary. A total of 100 copies of the survey were available at the booth for distribution.

In addition to the paper format, an online format of the survey was developed for participants and shared via social media platforms and email. The survey was set up through Survey Monkey with the link sent out utilizing an email list consisting of all county extension offices' employees and FFA advisors throughout the state of Mississippi. In addition, the email was sent to all 30 members of the Sale of Junior Champions committee. During the 6-week period after the conclusion of the 2018 sale, a survey link was available on the Mississippi 4-H Livestock Facebook page and an email reminder for survey participation was sent out three times.

Survey Instrument

The survey instrument was reviewed and approved by the Institutional Review Board for the Protection of Human Subjects prior to survey distribution. The questions for the survey were developed from input given by Mississippi State University faculty and staff including Extension agents, volunteers for the various youth programs, and previous participants for these youth programs. Question development and survey implementation followed principles from the Tailored Design Method (Dillman, 2000). Prior to the 2018 sale, the survey instrument was evaluated for the relative nature of the questioning and the clarity of questions and answers by a panel of four experts. These experts consisted of individuals that have participated in 4-H and/or FFA livestock programs as either an alumnus of these programs, producer involved with these programs, and/or University faculty/staff member with Extension responsibilities. Through feedback from these individuals minor changes were made to the survey instrument to improve the clarity of questioning utilizing language appropriate to the target audience prior to survey distribution.

Questions on both the paper and online formats of the survey instrument were identical and are displayed in Table 1. The survey instrument gathered demographic information in addition to participation information and perceived benefits of participation to those involved in the youth livestock sales program.

Table 1. Questions From the 2018 Sale of Junior Champions Survey Instrument

Question number	Survey question	Number of answers possible
1	How old are you?	4
2	What is your gender?	2
3	How many Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions events have you attended or participated in?	5
4	How did you hear about the Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions event?	7
5	How has the Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions directly impacted you or your child?	6
6	How have you financially supported scholarship funds for the Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions?	4
7	If you bought livestock from the Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions, what is the total amount you have spent on livestock from the Sale?	8
8	If you or your child participated in the Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions, how many animals did you or your child sell through this event during your time of showing livestock?	5
9	If you or your child participated in the Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions, how much money in scholarship funds have you or your child received through the Sale?	6

Table 1 (continued)

Question number	Survey question	Number of answers possible
10	If you or your child participated in the Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions, how much investment did your family put into raising and developing your animals to show?	8
11	If you or your child has sold an animal(s) in the Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions, what type of livestock did you or your child show?	6
12	If you or your child participated in the Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions, has the sale positively impacted you or your child's goals for college and future education?	5
13	If you or your child participated in the Dixie National Sale of Junior Champions, has the Sale positively impacted you or your child's career goal?	5
14	How long have you or your child been involved in Mississippi Youth Livestock Programs such as 4-H or FFA?	5
15	What has been your role associated with Mississippi Youth Livestock Programs?	7
16	Below is a list of life skills. For each life skill, indicate how participation in Mississippi Youth Livestock Programs such as the Dixie Nationals Sale of Junior Champions may have improved your or your child's abilities associated with that life skill. Only check one box for each life skill.	5

Of the 16 forced-choice questions, five were partially closed questions allowing for an "other" option with a space for writing in details if there was not an answer that matched the respondent's needs. The last question in the survey used a closed question with ordered choices to have the participants evaluate their level of improvement in the following life skills: decision making, time management, problem solving, goal setting, building friendships, professional networking, public speaking, respect, effective listening, and financial responsibility. Cronbach's alpha was applied to determine the reliability of the survey instrument with the results of the reliability analysis determined to be acceptable ($\alpha = 0.80$).

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics was utilized for each question with the number of responses totaled into respective groups based on the answer selection and percentages generated per answer response. A binomial test was performed for questions 12 and 13. Significance was denoted at a p-value less than 0.001.

Results

Demographics

The participants in this study (n = 176 completed the survey; 131 online surveys completed and 45 paper surveys completed) were characterized into four age groups. Of the four age groups, 12% were in the 18 to 25 age group, 26% were in the 25 to 40 age group, 45% were in the 40 to 60 age group, and the remaining 16% were outside of the age groups listed. As for gender, the majority (54%) were male.

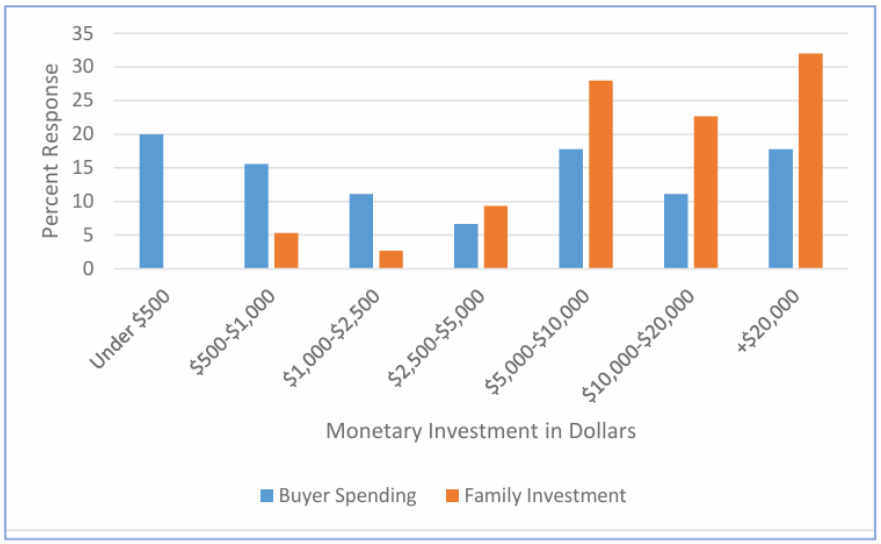
Involvement

According to survey responses, sale participation reflects a diverse group of attendees including 4-H/FFA members (22%), parents of participating youths (22%), volunteers (21%), Extension employees/FFA advisors (22%), buyers/sponsors (12%), and others (2%). The youth livestock sales program appears to encourage dedicated annual participation as 43% of the respondents had attended the Sale of Junior Champions six or more times, while only 10% of responders were first-time sale attendees.

Attendees of the event demonstrated various avenues of support of the event. From a financial standpoint, respondents reported that they bought livestock (31%), sponsors that donated funds (8%), or supported the sale in another manner (8%) such as sponsoring the pre-sale reception or promoting the sale participants. Those who indicated they supported the sale by purchasing animals (i.e., “buyers”) either this year or in previous years were broken into categories based on the amount they spent on the animal(s). The greatest number of animal buyers spent under $500 (Figure 1). These values vary because multiple buyers may combine funds to purchase one or more animals at the sale.

The youth exhibitor’s monetary investment in their animals varied (Figure 1). The investments made by youth exhibitors accounts for their spending over the course of their project. Possible expenses include feed costs, health care, transport, and show fees. Monetary investment varies based on several factors such as feed costs, facility use or rental, animal purchase costs, livestock species, and medical costs. As for the sale, youth exhibitors’ financial investment ranged from $500 to over $20,000. This amount included this year and any previous year of participation for the youth. When comparing family investments, the largest category/range was those families spending over $20,000 on their animal projects.

Figure 1. Percentage of Monetary Spending of Livestock Animal Sale Buyers Compared to Percentage of Monetary Investment by Youth Raising Livestock Animals for the Sale



Scholarship and Youth Development

Approximately 33% of the participants in the sale were directly impacted by receiving a scholarship or being the parent of youth who received a scholarship. Of the 75 respondents that received scholarship funding or were the parents of scholarship recipients, during their youth livestock show career (ages 8-18), 4% received under $1,000, 28% received $1,000 to $2,000, 17% received $2,000 to $3,000, 9% received $3,000 to $5,000, and 41% received over $5,000. Because some scholarships are awarded to Supreme Champion Breeding Animals or for winning educational contests associated with the youth livestock show and sale program, it is possible that youth received multiple scholarships of varying amounts over their youth show career.

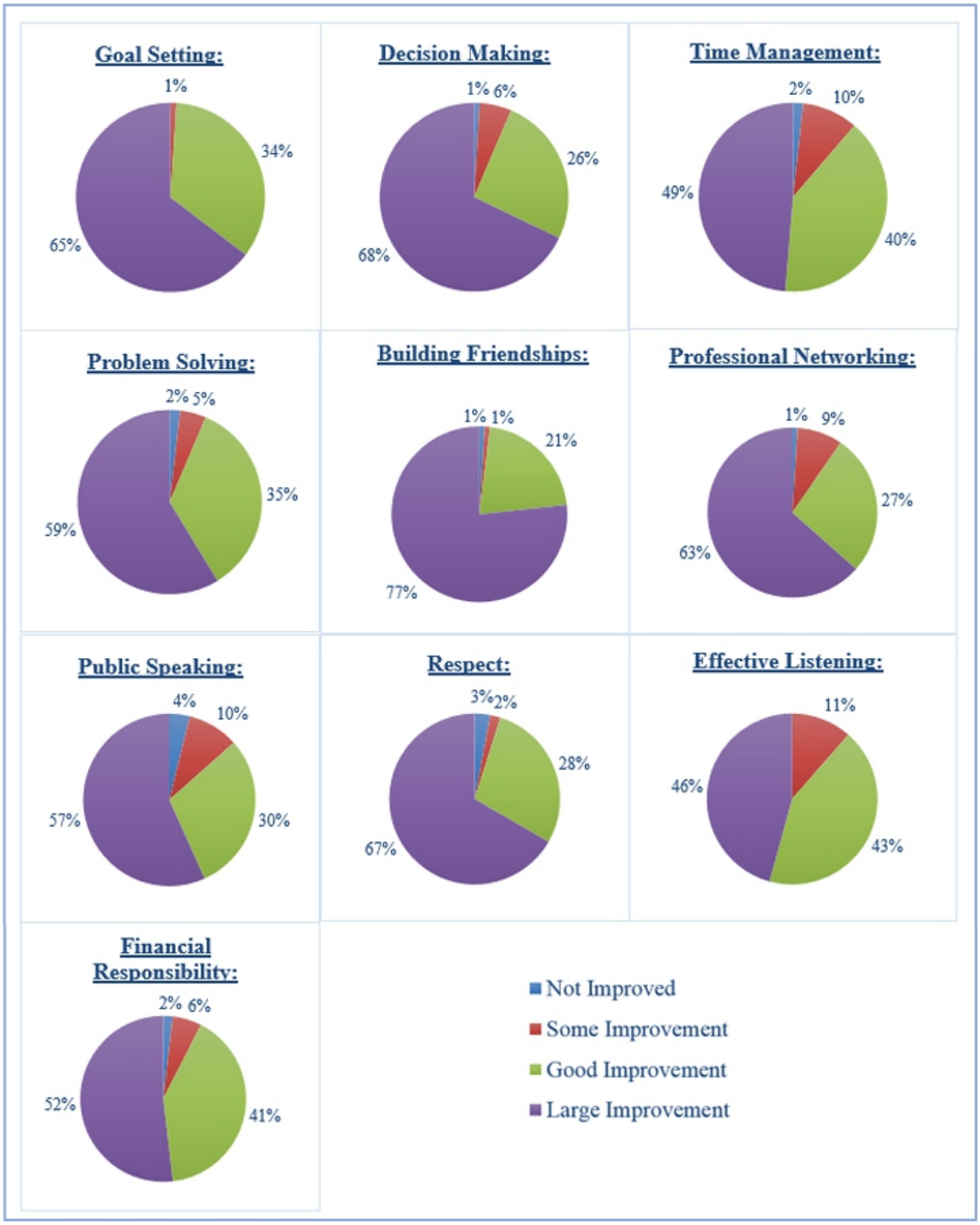
Participants were asked if they felt like they or their child's career goals had been positively impacted by the Sale of Junior Champions. Of the 91 people who answered Question 13 (response rate = 52%), 97% of respondents said that they or their child was positively impacted ($p < 0.001$). The majority of participants felt that they or their child's future collegiate and/or educational goals (Question 12) had been positively impacted by their participation in the sale ($p < 0.001$).

Life Skills Development

Question 16 (response rate = 59%) asked respondents to reflect on the extent to which their participation or their child's participation in a youth livestock sales program impacted the life skills of decision

making, time management, problem solving, goal setting, friendship building, professional networking, public speaking, respect, effective listening, and financial responsibility. Figure 2 illustrates respondents' answers to Question 16. Friendship building showed the strongest improvement with 77% of the responses indicating a "strong improvement" of that skill. Public speaking had the highest percentage of "not improved" responses (4%), while goal setting and effective listening were the only skills that had no respondents report "not improved". "Large improvement" was the preferred choice for respondents for all skills followed by "good improvement".

Figure 2. Participants' Life Skill Development Through a Youth Livestock Sales Program



Discussion

Limitations of the Survey Instrument

Due to the time and money needed to develop and carry out youth programs, there is an urgency by those overseeing these programs that some type of justification is available to continue funding and orchestrating these programs. While number of participants, scholarships awarded, funds collected, and overall costs are traditionally recorded for these youth programs, more thorough feedback on the impact of these programs, both financially and on participant development, has been lacking for more specialized programs like youth livestock sales programs. Often coordinators of these youth programs will visit with participants and families in person to get input on these programs, but the application of survey instruments has proven to be a useful tool for documenting specifics on program benefits and weaknesses (Taylor-Powell, Steele, & Doughah, 1996). Therefore, a survey instrument for a youth livestock sales program, the Sale of Junior Champions, was designed and implemented to assess participant involvement and impact, both financially and in skill development of the youth participants.

The survey instrument in this study was distributed in both paper and online formats to those that were involved in some aspect of the 2018 Sale of Junior Champions. Offering multiple formats of the survey allowed for a greater range of participants, increasing response numbers (Dillman, 2000). The recruitment of participants can be a limiting factor in survey studies (Parker, Manan, & Urbanski, 2012). In addition, with the goal of maximizing respondent numbers and knowing the diversity of participants that would be targeted, survey questions were developed to be less focused. Thus, more specific conclusions directed towards a certain population or particular aspects of the sale are unavailable at this time. Furthermore, the number of questions in the survey was limited in order to assist in attracting participants (Dillman, 2000), but this approach also restricted the ability to move into more detailed questioning. Nevertheless, despite these limitations, the use of multiple survey formats, less specific survey questions, and limited number of survey questions are recommended for other youth programs in the initial stages of applying a survey instrument for program assessment in order to increase survey participant numbers.

Sale Participation

With today's technology, youth are more prone to stay inside the home interacting with their electronics than working outside with their animals (Palmer, McCarthy, Perkins, Borden, & DiNallo, 2018). Thus, one goal of this survey was to collect feedback as to what was the driving force for those participating in

youth livestock sales programs. A driving force for sale attendance appeared to be the scholarships, as 33% received or had a child receive a scholarship, while 32% attended to present qualified sale animals, which resulted in the youth receiving monies for the sale of their animal. Specific questions, however, concerning motivation for participation were not directly asked in the survey instrument. Nevertheless, as Figure 1 demonstrates, while the $1,500 scholarships associated with this sale may be linked with participation, the monies invested by families for participation well exceeded the return of the scholarships gained, thus, suggesting intangible returns such as development of life skills. According to Arnold, Meinhold, Skubinna, and Ashton (2007), youth participants in county 4-H fairs did not report sale of their animal as the highest motivator for participation, but instead reported such things as "having fun," "achieving goals," "spending time with friends," and "teamwork," offering insight to what we refer to as these intangible returns for participation.

In addition, while money appeared to be linked with participation, only 15% of survey participants attributed their attendance to being a sale buyer and/or sponsor. Nevertheless, these individuals are valuable for future programs and for the broadening of youth participation. Likewise, many of the write-in responses recommended increasing the funding for the program and scholarships. Weikert, Hoover, Radhakrishna, and Swinker (2015) performed a similar study that included questions covering limiting factors for respondents and their participation in 4-H programs. The biggest limiting factor for participants was the cost of participation. Again, as seen in Figure 1, cost of participation well exceeded the value of the scholarships received, and thus, the expansion of scholarship opportunities will help to offset the cost of participation in this sale program.

Life Skills Development and Youth Programs

Previous studies have indicated personal growth and life skill development through the participation in specific aspects of 4-H programing (Anderson & Karr-Lilienthal, 2011; Davis, Stripling, Stephens, & Loveday, 2016; Haas, Mincemoyer, & Perkins, 2015). This, however, was the first survey to be administered at this event, thus the focus of this survey instrument was to determine the broad impact of participation in a youth program over a focused timeframe. Similar to Harris et al. (2016), a gain in development for all of the life skills evaluated was attributed to the youth livestock program. While neither study describes changes that may have been seen from year to year or changes that individuals may experience from participating in different aspects of the event, the results give a broad look at the impact of participation on youth development. Particularly, self-reflection of life skill development for a youth helps in future career goal achievement, redirecting the focus in youth livestock programs away

from just the monetary value of the sale of the animal (Lerner, Lerner, & Phelps, 2008). This is of particular importance with the cost of participation outweighing the return.

While development of certain life skills takes years (Lerner et al., 2008), this survey instrument is a snapshot of a particular year and how participating in this sale affected individuals. While this approach is not uncommon (Deaver & Probert, 2016; Harris et al., 2016), future survey studies should look at longitudinal studies as they assist in tracking the variations in skill development and perceptions moving data beyond immediate program effectiveness towards the quantification and qualification of long-term impact (Workman & Scheer, 2012). Nevertheless, one must also take into consideration that this type of self-reporting study is prone to biases due to subjectivity of the respondent. This can lead a respondent to distort one's answers to enhance self-esteem or favor one's self in some aspect (Reifenberg, 1986). In addition to this, a youth may respond differently to the survey than his or her parent or guardian who is responding on the youth's behalf. This survey instrument allowed for both youths and parents of these youths to evaluate life skill development of the youths, and thus, the combined responses may show variability related to what the youths perceive versus what their parents perceive. This survey study did not look at the specific differences between youths and their parents in these answers, and while this type of comparison would be of interest in discussing the variability in viewpoints of those involved with these programs, combining of the perspectives of the various groups involved in this youth program was designed to determine a collective impact of these programs, not specific to one group.

Further Development of Survey Instruments

The data produced by this survey instrument gives insight not only to this youth livestock sales program, but to other similar programs concerning program impact and insight on areas for development including recruitment of future sponsors and buyers to increase scholarship opportunities. However, for future survey studies associated with this or similar youth programs, survey data can be greatly elevated in validity and strength if a secondary study is conducted after adjustments are made to the event based on the data that the primary study provided. There are few secondary studies in this field, and yet, it is helpful to conduct research in this manner to evaluate the efficacy of the original study such that more statistical analysis may be completed.

Similarly, pre-event surveys are useful in obtaining a baseline to which to compare post-event results, such as evaluating the youths' life skills prior to and after participation in an event (Rockwell & Kohn, 1989). Junge, Manglallan, and Raskauskas (2003) utilized pre- and postevent survey instruments to evaluate how after-school programs affect the development of life skills. They found that the use of pre-

and post-program survey instruments allowed for the demonstration of life skill development over time and determination of how specific life skills differed in relation to other factors such as gender, age, and ethnic background. While the current study did not perform a pre-event survey, the question pertaining to life skills asked survey participants to assess the impact of the sale on life skills, and thus gave a perceived effect of the development of life skills over time. This approach is similar to previous studies evaluating youth livestock programs (Deaver & Probert, 2016; Harris et al., 2016).

Scholarship Impact for Youth Participants

The perceived improvements and impacts that this program has on the participants demonstrate the necessity and importance of youth programs such as this sale. These programs are demanding in terms of organization and execution, but they are vital to the development of life skills and aid in directing the educational path of youth. About 33% of the children involved in the 2018 sale received scholarships and 41% of the participants received over $5,000 in scholarship funds throughout their participation. Through the monies received by participants, they learned the value of the livestock industry giving them a stepping stone into a potential career in the livestock industry. In addition, the contacts that these youths make while participating in these programs will be of use if they decide to make a career in the livestock industry (Deaver & Probert, 2016).

While this study did not focus on the specifics concerning the impact of this program on career selection, the positive response on career goal development through participation in the sale suggests a potential for continued involvement in the livestock industry. According to Williams, Thompson, Taylor, and Sanders (2010), long-term youth involvement in 4-H programs aids in career choice of youth participants. However, the study goes on to suggest these programs may not provide adequate career awareness that will need to be supplemented by other external programs. Nevertheless, the development of life skills through these youth livestock programs as seen in the current study may help nourish the proactive nature of the youth to search out the needed career awareness for being successful in their career selection (Deaver & Probert, 2016).

Concluding Statement

The information that has been gathered from this survey instrument will help guide those involved with this type of youth livestock sales program in their future decisions for program development. The multi-facet approach to this survey instrument to investigate both the financial and youth developmental impacts will assist in program betterment by finding balance between dollars spent and the return seen in

the development of skills that will lay the foundation for the future success of youth participants. In the end, this survey instrument and the results can serve as guidance for other county and state programs wanting to do similar youth programs or utilize comparable survey instruments to evaluate their own youth livestock sales programs.

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Bridging Families and Schools to Prevent Youth From Running Away From Home

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ABSTRACT

Running away from home is a serious problem among American youth. It has been linked to numerous negative social, psychological, and behavioral outcomes. It is well established that family dysfunction is one reason that youth run away from home. However, less research focuses on how both families and schools influence youths' likelihood of running away from home. Drawing from a sample of 4,546 youth from the 1997 National Longitudinal Survey of Youth, I examine how youths' perceptions of their schools' safety, experiences with bully victimization, and bonds with their families and their schools predict the likelihood of running away from home. I find that youths' negative perceptions of their schools' safety increase the likelihood that they will run away from home. Additionally, I discover that youth who have been the victims of bullying are more likely to run away from home compared to their peers who have not been bullied. My findings also suggest a cumulative effect between youths' perceptions of unsafe schools and experiences with bullying, suggesting that youth are most likely to run away from home when they feel unsafe at school and have been the victim of childhood bullying. These findings are important because they have implications for policy development. My findings suggest that (a) promoting a positive and inclusive school environment and (b) helping youth foster stronger relationships may help deter youth from running away from home.

Key words: *running away from home, school safety, bullying, positive youth development, social capital*

Introduction

In the United States, it is estimated that one in seven youths between the ages of 10 and 18 years-old will run away from home, and youth ages 12 to 17 years old are at an increased risk of homelessness (National Conference of State Legislatures [NCSL], 2016). Runaways are youth under the age of 18 years who leave home for at least one night without their parents' or guardians' permission (Bailey, Camlin, & Ennett, 1998; Hammer, Finkelhor, & Sedlak, 2002). While most runaways do not experience long-term homelessness (Hammer et al., 2002; Milburn et al., 2007), running away from home places youth at an increased risk for numerous negative outcomes. For example, runaway youth are at an increased risk of physical (Whitbeck, Hoyt, & Ackley, 1997; Whitbeck & Simons, 1993) and sexual victimization (Kempf-Leonard & Johansson, 2007). Recently, sexual victimization in the form of human or sex trafficking is a growing area of concern for runaway youth (Fedina, Perdue, Bright, & Williamson, 2018; Middleton, Gattis, Frey, & Roe-Sepowitz, 2018). Human traffickers often target youth runways and force or manipulate them into prostitution lasting days or even years (Polaris, 2019). Youth who run away from foster homes are especially vulnerable to becoming a human trafficking victims. This risk is further heightened for youth who are female, had prior experiences with psychological and sexual abuse,

and had previous runaway episodes (Latzman, Gibbs, Feinberg, Kluckman, & Aboul-Hosn, 2018). In addition to experiencing various forms of victimization, runaway youth often experience mental health (Tyler, Schmitz, & Ray, 2018) and substance abuse issues (Martinez, 2006; McMorris, Tyler, Whitbeck, & Hoyt, 2002; Simons & Whitbeck, 1991; Whitbeck, 2017). Compared to their peers, runaways are more likely to be arrested and incarcerated (Biehal & Wade, 1999). Hagan and McCarthy (1998) argue that this may be because running away from home introduces youth to new delinquent opportunities (e.g., prostitution, drug use, etc.), as well as the need to engage in them.

Family dysfunction, abuse, and neglect are reasons that youth often run away from home (Cauce et al., 2000; Gwadz, Nish, Leonard, & Strauss, 2007; Jeanis, Fox, & Muniz, 2018; Radu, 2017; Tyler, Cauce, & Whitbeck, 2004; Tyler, Hagewen, & Melander, 2011; Tyler, Hoyt, Whitbeck, & Cauce, 2001; Whitbeck, 2017; Whitbeck, Hoyt, & Yoder, 1999). Research is relatively conclusive that family dysfunction is associated with higher rates of running away from home. However, the primary focus on negative family environments neglects other important contexts in youths' lives, such as schools. Additionally, the focus on family dysfunction overlooks families' strengths and resiliency. This leaves several questions unanswered. How important are youths' perceptions of their schools' environments for deterring youth from running away from home? Do negative experiences at school or with youths' peers influence their decisions to leave home without their parents' permission? Do positive relationships between parents and their children help deter youth from running away from home?

To address these questions, I first examined whether youths' perceptions of their schools' safety influences the likelihood that youth will run away from home. Youth spend a large portion of their time at school. Consequently, running away from home may be a means to avoid attending a school they deem unsafe and circumvent harassment from their peers at school. Because research establishes that victimization is a driving force behind youths' decisions to run away from home, I also explored whether youths' experiences with bullying and other forms of victimization increased their likelihood of running away from home. Next, I took a unique approach by assessing family strengths. Instead of focusing on victimization within the context of the family, I assessed if a positive family environment may help prevent youth from running away from home. Additionally, I examined whether school resources in the form of school social capital affect youths' likelihood of becoming runaways. In addition, to better understand the combined effect of youths' perceptions and experiences, I examined how together, youths' perceptions of their schools' safety and experiences with bullying predict youths' likelihood of running away from home.

Students' Perceptions of Schools' Safety and Bullying

Running away from home is a serious problem and negative perceptions of youths' schools environments may be a contributing factor (Radu, 2017). Studies consistently find that a safe school environment may help reduce delinquency (Cernkovich & Giordano, 1992; Liska & Reed, 1985; O'Donnell, Hawkins, Catalano, Abbott, & Day, 1995; Popp & Peguero, 2012). However, it is unclear whether youths' perceptions of their schools' safety influences runaway behaviors. While we know that there is an association between running away from home and educational issues, such as dropping out of school and higher rates of suspension and expulsion (Hagan & McCarthy, 1998; Whitbeck et al., 1999), few studies examine if youths' perceptions of their schools' safety influence their decisions to leave home.

Bullying is one form of peer victimization that is a serious problem for many youths. The Centers for Disease Control (2018) estimate that in 2017, 19% of youths were bullied at school and nearly 7% of youths reported not attending school due to safety concerns. Olweus (1991) describes bullying as the repeated physical and/or psychological aggression that is perpetrated with the intention to cause harm to one or more individuals. There are numerous negative consequences associated with bully victimization, including social strain with peers (Nansel, Craig, Overpeck, Saluja, & Ruan, 2004), higher rates of avoidance behaviors (Hutzell & Payne, 2012) and truancy (Lane, 1989), and an increased risk of engaging in subsequent violence (Radu, 2018). Yet, relatively unstudied is how bully victimization influences youths' likelihood of running away from home (Radu, 2017). My approach considers how students' perceptions of school safety and experiences with bullying victimization both individually and collectively influence youths' likelihood of running away from home.

Other Factors Associated with Running Away From Home

Several demographic factors are associated with running away from home. Females are more likely to run away from home than males (Morewitz, 2016; Sanchez, Waller, & Greene, 2006) and African-American and Latino adolescents are less likely to run away from home than their White/non-Latino counterparts (Tyler & Bersani, 2008). Youth ages 12 years and older are at an increased risk of running away from home (Benoit-Bryan, 2015). There is a strong relationship between family structure (Kim, Chenot, & Lee, 2015; Sanchez et al., 2006) and behavioral problems (Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration, 2004) predicting youths' likelihood of running away from home.

Holliday, Edelen, and Tucker (2017) point out that it is important to consider that runaways are a heterogeneous group, and youth tend to vary in terms of their individual characteristics and motivations for leaving home. While considering individual characteristics helps us better identify who runs away from home, understanding positive youth development theories helps explain both who and why youth may run away from home. Therefore, I draw from two interdisciplinary perspectives that provide frameworks for understanding positive youth development: ecological systems theory and social capital theory.

Positive Youth Development

Ecological Systems Theory

Bronfenbrenner's (1974, 1979) ecological systems theory emphasized the importance of considering resources from multiple contexts that may potentially influence youths' socialization and development. Two important contexts are families and schools. Bronfenbrenner conceptualized the ecological environment as a set of nested structures, including (a) the microsystem, (b) the mesosystem, and (c) the macrosystem. He argued that human development involves the way in which individuals perceive these social structures. The microsystem consists of patterns of activities, roles, and interpersonal relationships that individuals experience in a given setting. The mesosystem comprises the interrelations among two or more settings in which individuals actively participate, such as the relationships among home, school, and one's peer group. These connections employ additional forms, including social networks, communication among settings, and the extent and nature of knowledge and attitudes existing in one setting about the other. The macrosystem exists at the level of one's subculture and includes belief systems. Additionally, these systems extend beyond each context to encompass functional systems between settings. For example in this study, youth are embedded within the microsystem of their families, the mesosystem of relationships between microsystems (e.g., their families and schools), and the macrosystem of their cultural beliefs and perceptions of these systems (Bronfenbrenner, 1974, 1979).

The strength of using ecological systems theory as a framework for this study is that it considers how each context individually and collectively impacts youths' likelihood of running away from home. Few studies account for the influence of institutions external to the family when predicting youths' likelihood of running away from home. This is problematic because some studies find that families are more important than schools for promoting child social development (Parcel & Dufur, 2001) and deterring delinquency (Dufur, Hoffmann, Braudt, Parcel, & Spence, 2015). Other studies suggest that school

resources may be especially beneficial when family resources are limited (Greenwald, Hedges, & Laine, 1996). This suggests that the process of children's socialization is complex, involving multiple social systems, with two critical social systems being the family and the school. In the next section I discuss how families and schools have the potential to make capital investments in children and adolescents in the forms of family social capital and school social capital.

Social Capital Theory: Family and School Social Capital

Social capital refers to connections between and among individuals that produce social outcomes, reflecting the value of relationships between people (Coleman, 1990). Social capital theory poses that individuals benefit through their social relationships and participation in groups. Coleman (1988, 1990) argues that social capital is developed through family interaction, and parental interest in their children, parental monitoring, and extended family exchange and support are also forms of family social capital. Hagan and McCarthy's (1998) version of social capital theory suggests that youth are more likely to run away from disadvantaged homes because parents have less social capital. Lower levels of social capital may include weakened bonds between parents and their children and inconsistent and harsh parenting, both of which increase youths' likelihood of running away from home (Hagan & McCarthy, 1998). This is supported by other studies, such as Bursik's (1999) research that suggests that social capital is an informal mechanism that may help control delinquent and criminal behaviors. Research consistently finds that adolescents with lower levels of family social capital are more likely to engage in problematic behaviors (Dufur et al., 2015; Dufur, Parcel, & McCune, 2008; Dufur, Parcel, & Troutman, 2013; Milkie, Nomaguchi, & Denny, 2015), which may include running away from home (Luster & Small, 1994).

Capital at school also affects children's academic, behavioral, and social outcomes (Parcel, Dufur, & Cornell Zito, 2010). High levels of school social capital include positive perceptions of schools' teachers and fairness in terms of grading and discipline (Radu, 2018). Parcel and Bixby (2016) argue that school social capital also consists of bonds between parents and schools. Strong connections between parents and schools create bridging social capital between the family and the school (Coleman, 1991; Parcel & Bixby, 2016; Parcel et al.; 2010; Putnam, 2000). Dika and Singh (2002) suggest that school-wide parental involvement in school activities, such as helping with fundraisers, taking an active role through parent-teacher conferences, and assisting in classroom duties, may contribute to the overall well-being and functioning of the school. Parochial schools may have a positive impact on student outcomes, possibly owing to student-teacher bonds, a form of social capital and values shared by family, community members, the church and school (Parcel & Dufur, 2001). Additional studies, such as

Maddox and Prinz (2003) argue that social bonds to schools may discourage students from engaging in behaviors that do not align with the values and norms of the school. Consequently, these studies suggest that social capital may take several forms and that each is important for reducing youths' likelihood of running away from home.

Current Study

While research shows that multiple contexts influence youths' socialization and development, research continues to overlook key aspects of these contexts, including youths' perceptions of their schools' safety and youths' experiences with victimization both at school and in other contexts. Therefore, my approach contributes to the literature by examining how running away from home is affected by multiple contexts. Additionally, victimization is one of the strongest predictors of running away from home and perceiving one's school as unsafe may exacerbate the effects of bully victimization on the likelihood of running away from home, which is why I examine the combined effect of negative perceptions of schools' safety and bully victimization predicting the likelihood of running away from home.

Data and Measures

I used data from the National Longitudinal Survey of Youth 1997 (Bureau of Labor Statistics, U.S. Department of Labor, 2015; hereafter NLSY97). The NLSY97 is a household-based, nationally representative longitudinal study, following a cohort of youth born between the years 1980 through 1984 with Wave 1 starting in 1997, continuing to Wave 16 collected in 2013. The oldest respondents were 16 years old as of December 31, 1996 and the youngest were 12 years old. The initial sample included 8,984 individuals originating from 6,819 unique households; 1,862 households included more than one NLSY97-eligible respondent. Of the 8,984 total respondents, 4,546 respondents were considered eligible for this study because they were (a) between the ages of 13 and 15 at Wave 2 of the survey and (b) living with a parent or guardian at the date of the interview. I focused my analysis on 13 to 15-year-olds because recently there has been a shift in younger youths leaving home prematurely (NCSL, 2016); therefore, more research is needed that focuses on the runaway behaviors of this younger cohort of youth. I measured my dependent variable, running away from home at Wave 2 (1998) from a question asking respondents if they had left home and stayed away at least one night without their parent's prior knowledge or permission since the date of the last interview at Wave 1 (1997) of the survey.

Independent Variables

Perception of School Safety, Bullying, and Other Forms of Victimization

I measured perception of school safety at Wave 1 (1997) with a survey question asking respondents, "Do you feel safe at school?" Responses ranged from 1 (strongly disagree) to 4 (strongly agree). I measured bullying with the question, "Before you turned age 12, were you ever the victim of repeated bullying?" and responses included 1 (yes) or 0 (no). I used two variables to measure school-based victimization: threatened at school and victim of property theft at school, which are included in analysis as dichotomous variables. As additional measures of victimization, respondents were asked if their house was ever broken into when they were a child and if they had ever witnessed a shooting as a child. Witnessing extreme violence, such as a shooting, is oftentimes referred to as "co-victimization" and is associated with serious consequences like those resulting from direct victimization (Shakoor & Chalmers, 1991). This demonstrates the importance of including witnessing a shooting as a measure for victimization. I measured both forms of victimization as dichotomous variables: 1 (yes, experienced victimization) and 0 (no, did not experience victimization).

Family Social Capital, School Social Capital, and Other Family Characteristics

To measure family social capital, I created an index that included three measures for parental involvement or time parents spend with their children and one measure for parental knowledge of child's teachers and school. The index ranged from 0, indicating low levels of family social capital, to 25, suggesting high levels of family social capital. Factor analysis suggests that all four items load on one factor, with a Cronbach's alpha of .641 indicating a moderate level of reliability. To measure school social capital, I created an index from questions at Wave 1 (1997). Respondents were asked if (a) teachers are interested in students' success at school, (b) the grading system was utilized fairly at school, and (c) discipline was fair. Factor analysis suggests that all three items loaded on one factor, and the Cronbach's alpha of .734 indicates a moderate level of reliability. I used three additional measures of school social capital, the first being type of school, 1 (parochial school) and 0 (all other schools). Secondly, I measured if schools have school-wide parental involvement in school. My final measure of school social capital was student-teacher ratio; a lower student-teacher ratio provides an opportunity for stronger bonds between students and teachers (Parcel & Dufur, 2001). I also included gross household income as a categorical variable with most household income reports (97%) coming from the respondents' parents. In addition, I included measures for both residential paternal and residential maternal years of completed education to reflect family socioeconomic status. I controlled for prior runaway experiences, delinquency, peer delinquency, race/ethnicity, sex, family structure, and age.

Analysis

I tested for multicollinearity by examining bivariate correlations between each of the independent variables, and both the tolerance scores and variance inflation factor (VIF) scores indicate that multicollinearity does not challenge the findings. The average missing data across independent variables was approximately 10%, which is not uncommon in longitudinal datasets (Enders, 2010). I used a series of five random imputations to estimate values for missing data across all independent variables. Using logistic regression, my analysis predicted the binary outcome variable, likelihood of running away from home in 1998 from sets of independent variables measured in 1997. In Model 1, I tested whether perception of schools' safety influenced youths' likelihood of running away from home. In Model 2, I added measures of victimization occurring at school and in other contexts. Model 3 tested the effect of perception of school safety and family social capital, while Model 4 introduced perception of school safety and school social capital to predict youths' likelihood of running away from home. In Model 5, Iincluded all independent variables and control variables. In Model 6, I tested the interaction effect between bully victimization and perception of schools' safety predicting running away from home.

Results

Table 1 includes descriptive statistics for all variables included in analysis, and the bivariate correlations between each independent variable and the dependent variable, running away from home. At Wave 2 (1998) almost seven percent of respondents reported that they had run away from home since the date of the last interview. On average, most respondents "agreed" that they felt safe at school. Almost 20% of respondents specified that they had been victims of bullying. Table 1 also shows that perception of school safety is negatively correlated with running away from home ($p \leq .001$, two-tailed).

Table 2 presents results from logistic regression models predicting likelihood of running away from home in 1998. Model 1 shows support for my hypothesis that perceiving one's school as safe is negatively associated with running away from home (-.474, $p \leq .001$, two-tailed). In Model 2, I find partial support for my hypothesis that experiences with victimization are statistically significant positive predictors of running away from home. Respondents who had been the victim of bullying (.423, $p \leq .01$) and threatened at school (.085, $p \leq .05$) are more likely to run away from home compared to their peers who did not experience these forms of victimization. Witnessing a shooting (.531, $p \leq .001$) also increases the likelihood that youths will run away from home. Model 3 demonstrates support for my hypothesis that family social capital is negatively correlated with and a statistically significant predictor of youths' likelihood of running away from home (-.066, $p \leq .001$).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics and Bivariate Correlations with Running Away From Home, N = 4,546

	Mean	Min-Max	Bivariate correlation
Dependent variable (1998)			
Ran away from home (in the past year)	.067	0-1	
Independent variables (1997)			
Perception of school safety	3.18	1-4	-.093***
Victim of bullying	.195	0-1	.082***
Victim of threats at school	.555	0-1	.085***
Victim of property theft at school	.419	0-1	.044***
Victim of home burglary	.154	0-1	.048***
Witnessed shooting	.105	0-1	.075***
Family social capital	12.27	0-25	-.088***
Gross household income	2.95	1-5	-.065***
Father's education *(in years)*	12.30	2-20	-.060**
Mother's education *(in years)*	12.55	2-20	-.012
School social capital	9.16	3-12	-.112***
Parochial school	.065	0-1	-.031*
School-wide parental involvement	.374	0-1	-.021
Student-teacher ratio	2.34	1-4	.015
Prior runaway episode	.064	0-1	.181***
Delinquency index	1.39	0-7	.203***
Peer delinquency index	1.07	0-5	.080***
Black/African American	.242	0-1	-.010
Hispanic/Latino	.214	0-1	.014
Other race/ethnicity	.009	0-1	.022
Males	.517	0-1	-.039**
Two biological parent family	.728	0-1	-.015**
Age (year of birth)	1983	1982-1984	-.045**

Note. All tests were 2-tailed; ***$p \leq .001$, **$p \leq .01$, *$p \leq .05$

Model 3 shows that perception of school safety remains statistically significant and negative in predicting youths' likelihood of running away from home, net of family social capital, gross

household income, and both father's and mother's level of completed education. Model 4 indicates that school social capital is statistically significant and negative in predicting running away from home (-.197, $p \leq .001$), which supports my hypothesis that high levels of school social capital prevent youth from running away from home. Attending parochial school, schoolwide parental involvement, and student-teacher ratio are not statistically significant in predicting youths' likelihood of running away from home.

Model 5 includes all independent variables and the control variables. Model 5 demonstrates that perception of school safety remains statistically significant and negative (-.210; $p \leq .05$) in predicting the likelihood of running away from home, net of the control variables. Model 5 also shows that both family social capital and school social capital remain statistically significant and negative predicting youths' likelihood of running away from home even after controlling for a prior runaway episode (.923, $p \leq .001$), delinquency (.285, $p \leq .001$), and the remaining control variables. Following prior research, Model 5 also shows that females are more likely to run away from home compared to males (-.556, $p \leq .001$).

In Model 6, I test my hypothesis that perception of school safety moderates the relationship between bully victimization and youths' likelihood of running away from home. I find support for this hypothesis. Figure 1 illustrates Model 6 graphically, showing the nature of the interaction effect between bully victimization and perception of school safety predicting youths' likelihood of running away from home. As shown in Figure 1, youth who were the victims of childhood bullying who reported that they "strongly disagreed" that they felt safe at school were the most likely to run away from home. While we know that both bully victimization and feeling unsafe at school are linked to negative adolescent outcomes, Figure 1 illustrates that together, youths are at cumulative disadvantage in terms of their likelihood of running away from home when they report both being the victim of childhood bullying and feeling unsafe at school. Yet, for youths who were the victim of childhood bullying, a positive perception of their schools' safety considerably decreased their likelihood of running away from home.

Table 2. Summary of Logistic Regression Analyses Predicting Likelihood of Running Away From Home (N = 4546)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Perception of school safety	-.474*** (.622)	-.325*** (.722)	-.400*** (.671)	-.281*** (.821)	-.210* (.811)	-.319*** (.727)
Victim of bullying		.423** (1.53)			.242† (1.27)	-.784 (.457)
Victim of threats at school		.085* (1.09)			.049 (1.05)	.054 (1.06)
Victim of property theft at school		.017 (1.02)			-.018 (.982)	-.018 (.982)
Victim of home burglary		.267† (1.31)			.144 (1.16)	.154 (1.17)
Witnessed shooting		.531*** (1.71)			.166 (1.18)	.169 (1.18)
Family social capital			-.066*** (.936)		-.027* (.976)	-.026* (.974)
Gross household income			-.110* (.896)		-.102† (.903)	-.103† (.902)
Father's education (*in years*)			-.016 (.985)		-.014 (.986)	-.014 (.986)
Mother's education (*in years*)			.007 (1.01)		-.001 (.999)	.000 (1.00)
School social capital				-.197*** (.821)	-.088* (.916)	-.088* (.916)
Parochial School				-.398 (.672)	-.190 (.827)	-.183 (.833)
School-wide parental involvement				-.145 (.865)	-.141 (.868)	-.136 (.873)
Student-teacher ratio				.044 (1.05)	.046 (1.05)	.042 (1.04)

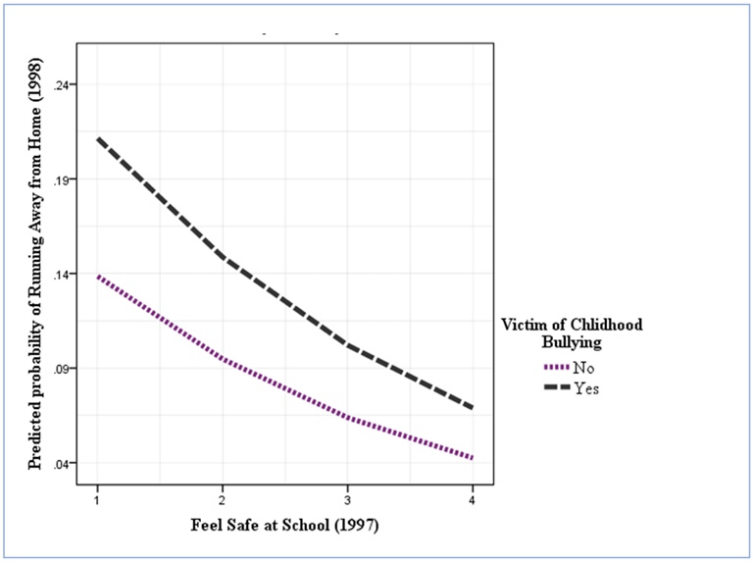
Table 2 (continued)

	Model 1	Model 2	Model 3	Model 4	Model 5	Model 6
Control Variables						
Prior runaway episode					.923*** (2.52)	.934*** (2.55)
Delinquency index					.285*** (1.33)	.279*** (1.32)

Peer delinquency index					-.045 (.956)	-.040 (.961)
Black/African American					-.231 (.794)	-.250 (.779)
Hispanic/Latino					.018 (1.02)	.019 (1.02)
Other race/ethnicity					.406 (1.50)	.435 (1.55)
Males					-.556*** (.573)	-.556*** (.573)
Two-biological parent family					-.300* (.741)	-.293* (.746)
Age (year of birth)					-.036 (.965)	-.035 (.965)
Perception of school safety*						.354* (1.43)
Constant	-1.17	-1.93	-.235	-.052	70.89	69.52
-2 log likelihood	2205.28	2166.03	2169.01	2175.56	1977.00	1972.98
Chi-square	37.08	76.33	73.35	66.80	265.35	269.38
df	1	6	5	5	23	24

*Note. All tests were 2-tailed; *** $p \leq .001$, ** $p \leq .01$, * $p \leq .05$, † $p \leq .10$. Values in parentheses are exponentiated β (effects on the odds).*

Figure 1. Predicted Probability of Running Away From Home by Perception of School Safety and Bully Victimization



Additional Analysis

High levels of family social capital and school social capital each have the potential to prevent youth from running away from home. However, these resources may be less effective in deterring youth from running away from home when youth have negative perceptions of their schools' safety. The relationship between family social capital and school social capital predicting running away from home may be moderated by youths' perceptions of their schools' safety. For example, I would expect that youth with the highest levels of family and school social capital who report feeling safe at school would be the least likely to run away from home. I examine these relationships by testing the interaction effects between (a) family social capital and perception of school safety and (b) school social capital and perception of school safety predicting youths' likelihood of running away from home. I individually add each interaction effect to the main effects model (Model 6) to predict youths' likelihood of running away from home. The interactive effects were not statistically significant ($p \leq .10$), and therefore, were not shown in Table 2. This suggests that the magnitude or direction of the effect of family social capital and school social capital predicting the likelihood of running away from home was not conditional upon youths' perceptions of schools' safety. Further analysis considered if collectively, family social capital and school social capital deter youth from running away from home. The interaction effect between family social capital and school social capital was not statistically significant in predicting runaway behaviors.

Discussion

Existing research on the effects of family and school characteristics on adolescent outcomes rarely considers youths' perceptions of their schools' safety when studying problem behaviors during adolescence. Prior research on runaways focuses primarily on youths' unstable home environments and experiences with family neglect and abuse. I took a different approach, as my primary objective was to test whether youths' perceptions of their schools as unsafe increased their likelihood of running away from home. I find support for this idea. Perception of school safety proves to be an important deterrent for running away from home in all five additive models. In the final additive model (Model 5), youths' perceptions of their schools' safety continue to be an important predictor of running away from home, even when controlling for experiences with victimization, family social capital, household income, socioeconomic status, and other key factors known to affect youths' likelihood of running away from home. This suggests that even with high levels of family resources, when youth feel unsafe at school they are more likely to run away from home compared to youth who have positive perceptions of their schools' environments.

I also evaluated the effects of several forms of victimization on running away from home. I find support for my hypothesis that experiences with bullying and other forms of victimization both internal and external to the school increase youths' likelihood of running away from home. While research establishes that there are numerous negative consequences associated with being the victim of bullying, my findings suggest that experiences with bullying have long-term effects of youths' behavioral outcomes, such as running away from home. This suggests that in addition to the academic and social consequences associated with bullying, bully victims may attempt to escape being the victim of subsequent bullying by leaving home. Unfortunately, running away from home typically places youth at a greater risk for numerous other forms of victimization, which makes running away from home a dangerous and ineffective mechanism for coping with bullying. Additionally, the relationship between being the victim of childhood bullying and youths' perceptions of their schools' safety suggests that negative perceptions and negative experiences have cumulative effects on running away from home. That is, youth most likely to run away from home if they have been the victim of bullying and perceive their school as unsafe.

My analysis also suggests that both family resources and school resources in the form of social capital are important for preventing youth from running away from home. I found that higher levels of both family social capital and school social capital may discourage youth from becoming runaways. While previous research supports the notion that dysfunctional families predict running away from home, my findings suggest that the time youths spend with their families and the positive connections youths have with their schools are important resources for discouraging running away from home. This could help guide future policy that is interested in ways in which multiple contexts could help promote positive youth and young adult outcomes.

Limitations

Variations in students' perceptions of their schools' safety and experiences with victimization may be linked to attending poor-quality schools or living in disadvantaged neighborhoods. Racial/ethnic minority youth and youth from lower socioeconomic families are more likely to attend these poorer quality schools and reside in less advantaged neighborhoods. My study does not address the complexities of racial/ethnic inequalities or economic disparities linked to disadvantaged schools/neighborhoods. In addition, while LGBT youth tend to experience disproportionately high rates of homelessness each year (Keuroghlian, Shtasel, & Bassuk, 2014), data limitations prevented me from testing the relationship between youths' sexual orientation and/or gender identity and running away from home. It is important to note that while youth in foster care have higher rates of running away from

home. It is important to note that while youth in foster care have higher rates of running away from home than youth living at home (King, Abrego, Narendorf, Ha, & Santa Maria, 2017), the current research focuses primarily on youth who were residing at home at the time of their runaway episode.

While my analysis focused on family strengths in the form of family social capital, it is important to note that family victimization is associated with higher rates of running away from home (Whitbeck, 2017). Data limitations prevented me from incorporating additional measures of family victimization. Additional data sets were considered for this analysis, including the Education Longitudinal Study of 2002 (ELS: 2000). However, I determined that several indicators were either not included in the survey or the NLSY97 had superior measures. For example, the ELS: 2000 lacks questions about delinquency and peer group delinquency both of which are associated with higher rates of running away from home. Also, the ELS: 2000 asks youth how many times they experienced bullying during the first semester/term of the same school year, rather than asking respondents if they had ever experienced bullying. The NLSY97 captures respondents' experiences with bullying and other forms of victimization during childhood and early adolescence.

This analysis was based on the experiences of a cohort of youth prior to the existence of bullying through text messaging, social media, and other forms of technology. Recently, there is growing concern about cyberbullying (Aivazpour & Beebe, 2018; Zych, Baldry, Farrington, & Llorent, 2018). Similar to traditional bullying, cyberbullying is associated with severe consequences (Abreu & Kenny, 2018; Balakrishnam, 2018). I argue that running away from home may be an additional negative outcome. For youth, escaping cyberbullying may be difficult because the mobility of technology allows youth to be bullied concurrently in several different contexts with a wider audience (Motswi & Mashegoane, 2017). Because of these issues, I expect that cyberbullying may have more of an effect on youths' likelihood of running away from home compared to traditional forms of bullying. Future research should consider replicating this analysis with more recent data to examine how cyberbullying may influence youths' likelihood of running away from home. Additional research should also take into account that youth may be victims of both traditional and cyberbullying. Together, these forms of harassment may have compound effects on youths' well-being and increase their likelihood of running away from home.

Conclusion

Better understanding of how multiple contexts and risk factors influence youths' likelihood of running away from home may help in preventing future run away episodes and improve treatment outcomes for those who have run away from home and experienced negative events while away from home

and experienced negative events while away from home (Hershberger et al., 2018). Besides time spent at home, youth spend most of their time at school (Larson, 2001). If remaining at home means attending a school that youth deem negative in terms of safety, youth may choose to leave home rather than be required to attend school. Strict truancy laws require parents to send their children to school, particularly if they are under 16 years old (Gleich-Bope, 2014). This suggests that neither the youth nor their parents may feel that they have much control over whether or not a minor attends school on a regular basis. While some families may have the knowledge and resources to choose their children's schools, for many, changing schools is not an option (Parcel & Taylor, 2015). Therefore, it is important to consider ways to improve youths' perceptions of their schools' environments and stop bullying.

Promoting a more positive and inclusive peer culture may discourage bullying, which in turn may help prevent youth from running away from home (Lyng, 2018). Studies suggest that implementing interventions that focus on both individual and contextual factors may keep youth from bullying their peers (Espelage, Van Ryzin, & Holt, 2018). One approach to help foster more positive and inclusive peer culture is youths' engagement in structured after-school programs that focus on youth development (e.g., 4-H, Boy Scouts and Girl Scouts, YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, etc.) and time spent involved in civic engagement (Li, Bebiroglu, Phelps, Lerner, & Lerner, 2008). Li and colleagues found that youths' increased time spent engaged in meaningful out-ofschool activities deterred them from engaging in adverse activities. Additionally, social media may also be used as a mechanism to help provide support for youth, as Lee and Horsely (2017) found that the use of a 4-H Facebook page helped encourage positive youth development through civic engagement.

When youth feel socially connected to organizations outside of the school—if issues arise at home or at school—their social bonds to these groups may help prevent youth from running away from home. Additionally, organizations that include structured, parental-supervised activities may provide youth with other forms of adult support beyond their teachers and parents. Consequently, positive adult relationships are important for youth because they provide another outlet to report problematic issues at home or at school. Recently, the "Pathways to Success" Program emphasized the role of positive adult relationships in youths' lives (Davis, Prendergast, & McHugh, 2018). Youths' interaction with mentors, coaches, advisors and other positive adults help youth build community connections. In turn, these connections help prevent problematic behaviors and outcomes, including youth homelessness (Davis et al., 2018).

Helping youth develop more supportive relationships with their schools and with their peers is important for preventing runaway episodes. Improving youths' perceptions of their schools' environments and

cultivating more positive experiences among youth may act as protector buffers to assist and comfort youth if they are feeling isolated from traumatic events going on at home. In turn, these positive experiences and relationships may help mediate the relationship between dysfunctional family environments and runaway episodes. Future research should consider examining these complex relationships to help develop policies that address how resources from multiple contexts and positive social relationships may influence youths' decisions to run away from home.

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