

KENTUCKY 4-H AGENTS' PERCEPTIONS OF THEIR LEVELS OF COMPETENCY AND FREQUENCY OF USE OF VOLUNTEER ADMINISTRATION FUNCTION

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Abstract

*The purpose of this study was to determine how 4-H Youth Development Agents in Kentucky perceived their level of competence and the frequency of use in each of the four categories and 18 phases outlined in the GEMS Model of Volunteer Administration. The difference between the level of competence and the frequency of use yields a need score which provides a framework for determining which phases of volunteer administration should be emphasized in staff development to increase agents' knowledge or performance. These phases include: (Generate) needs assessment, writing job (position) descriptions, identifying, recruiting, screening, selecting; (Educate) orienting, protecting, providing resources, teaching; (Mobilize) engaging, motivating, supervising; (Sustain) evaluating, recognizing, retaining, redirecting and disengaging. The three phases of greatest competency were found to be Providing Resources, Recognizing and Engaging. Conversely, agents reported Disengaging as their least competent phase. Respondents also indicated that they most frequently Provide Resources, Recognize and Engage volunteers. 4-H Agents also least frequently use the Disengaging phase. The Borich Model (1979) was utilized to calculate the need score for each phase where by (Competency - Use) * Competency = Needs Score. The five phases with the highest need scores included Providing Resources, Recognizing, Supervising, Recruiting and Engaging. The findings indicate that 4-H Agents' perceived level of competency to be greatest for the Mobilize category, followed by Educate, Generate and Sustain. An identical rank was calculated for frequency of use. The Mobilize category was also found to be ranked the highest for the calculated need score, followed by Sustain, Educate and Generate.*

Introduction/Review of Literature

A volunteer administrator is the leader and direction setter of volunteer efforts, a coordinator of volunteer programs and personnel, an advocate for volunteers, the key communication link between the organization and its volunteers, and a fund raiser to support the volunteer program (Fisher & Cole, 1993). The volunteer administrator of the 21st century will need to have a broader range of competencies, skills and expertise in order to meet the growing challenges of coordinating volunteer efforts in those organizations which utilize them (Vineyard, 1993). The volunteer administrator will need to move beyond the basic functions of planning, organizing,

staffing, directing, controlling and rewarding volunteers to utilizing competencies, skills, expertise, techniques and strategies that are both complex and interdependent (Vineyard).

Brudney (1990) identified four activities in which volunteer administrators need to be competent. These activities include: (a) volunteer recruitment and publicity; (b) interviewing and screening volunteer applicants; (c) orientation, teaching, evaluating and recognizing volunteers; (d) serving as a resource and expert on all components of volunteer involvement and coordination and as chief advocate for the volunteer program.

Assessing the competence and frequency of use of volunteer administrative functions

is a critical first step toward developing an effective, state-wide volunteer development program. This state-wide program will be useful in remediating or developing agent skills which are critical to effective volunteer administration. Professional development opportunities, agent in-services, volunteer education and development opportunities and educational resources are all examples of state-wide programs which could be developed in order to serve the needs of Kentucky 4-H Youth Development Agents in the area of volunteer administration.

Volunteer administration is a rapidly growing and evolving field. In order to serve the needs of society, volunteer administrators must strategically position themselves for changing audiences and clientele as well as a changing volunteer base. Progressive programs need to anticipate and meet these requirements. The tools and techniques that volunteer administrators use to manage and develop programs must meet the challenges of new and emerging concerns.

The GEMS Model of Volunteer Administration (Culp, Deppe, Castillo & Wells, 1998) is a comprehensive model of volunteer administration and served as the theoretical framework for the study. GEMS, an acronym for Generate, Educate, Mobilize and Sustain, consists of 18 separate, interrelated phases of volunteer development. These phases include:

(Generate) organizational needs assessment, writing job (position) descriptions, identifying, recruiting, screening, selecting; (Educate) orienting, protecting, providing resources, teaching; (Mobilize) engaging, motivating, supervising; (Sustain) evaluating, recognizing, retaining, redirecting and disengaging. GEMS is depicted as a spiral, illustrating that volunteer development is an ongoing process (Figure 1). The GEMS Model (Culp, et. al, 1998) builds on the foundation previously established by other volunteerism specialists. GEMS addresses the needs of contemporary volunteer administrators and includes components not found in earlier models.

State Program Leaders and Extension Volunteerism Specialists assess 4-H Youth Development Agents' level of competence and frequency of use of volunteer administration functions. Agents will benefit from this assessment by participating in an effective, state-wide program, developed in response to the identified needs of agents serving as volunteer administrators. This program could include state-wide professional development opportunities, agent in-service programs, volunteer education opportunities and the development of educational resources for agents and volunteers. Additionally, an initial benchmark measurement will be established for future assessments.

GEMS Model

A Spiral Profile of Volunteer Administration

Generate Educate Mobilize Sustain

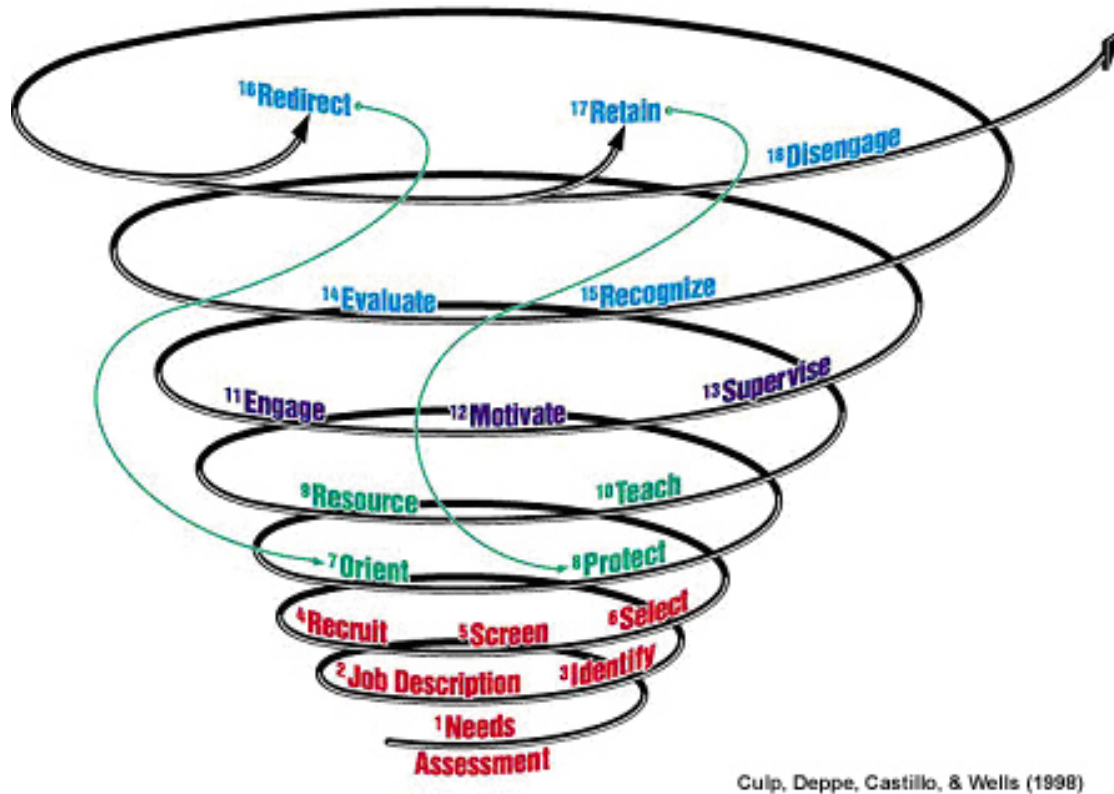


Figure 1. GEMS Model of Volunteer Administration

Purpose & Objectives

The purpose of this study was to explore and describe how 4-H Youth Development Agents in Kentucky perceive their level of competence and the frequency of use of each of the 18 phases in the GEMS Model of Volunteer Administration.

Objectives

1. To describe, demographically, University of Kentucky 4-H Youth Development Agents.
2. To explore and describe how University of Kentucky 4-H Youth Development Agents perceive their level of competence of each of the 18 identified phases of volunteer development and four categories of volunteer administration.
3. To explore and describe how the University of Kentucky 4-H Youth Development Agents perceive their frequency of use of each of the 18 identified phases and four categories of volunteer administration.

4. To determine what, if any, discrepancies exist between 4-H Agents' perceptions of their level of qualification/competence and frequency of their use of the 18 identified phases and four categories of volunteer development. This discrepancy will be utilized to calculate a perceived need score, as described by Borich (1979).
5. To determine if a relationship exists between populational parameters and Agent's perceptions of their level of qualification/competence and frequency of use of the 18 identified phases and four categories of volunteer administration.

Procedures

Population and Sample

This survey research was descriptive and correlational in nature and was conducted utilizing mail questionnaires as outlined by Dillman (1978). The target population for this census was identified as 4-H Youth Development Agents in Kentucky (N = 144). The frame of the study was obtained from the University of Kentucky Extension personnel directory.

Instrumentation

Eighteen areas of volunteer administration were identified in the conceptual GEMS Model. The Volunteer Administration Questionnaire utilized in this study was developed by Deppe (1998) with changes made in the demographics section to fit the target population.

Statements pertaining to each of the 18 volunteer administration components were presented. Respondents were asked to indicate their level of competence by circling the appropriate number on an eight point Likert-type scale. Respondents were also asked to indicate their frequency of use for each of the identified phases in carrying out their duties as a volunteer administrator by circling the appropriate number on the eight point Likert-type scale.

Responses for level of competence included: 8 = Extremely Qualified, 7 = Highly Qualified, 6 = Qualified, 5 = Moderately Qualified, 4 = Somewhat

Qualified, 3 = Slightly Qualified, 2 = Negligibly Qualified, 1 = Not Qualified. Responses for Frequency of Use included: 8 = Always, 7 = Usually, 6 = Frequently, 5 = Often, 4 = Sometimes, 3 = Seldom, 2 = Rarely, 1 = Never.

Validity was established by a panel of experts including researchers and experts in the field of volunteerism and research design. Samples of the research instrument were submitted to each of the experts for their review and comments which resulted in minor wording changes to improve clarity and readability.

Reliability of the research instrument was established by Deppe (1998) by pilot testing among a sample (N = 44) of 4-H Youth Development Extension Educators in Indiana. Reliability results, as established by Deppe, included Cronbach's alphas which ranged from .61 to .91 for competence and from .63 to .93 for frequency of use of the 18 GEMS phases. Likewise, Cronbach's alphas ranged from .73 to .92 for competence and from .70 to .89 for frequency of use for the four GEMS categories.

Conditions of Testing

The data for this study was collected by mail questionnaire utilizing the total design method as outlined by Dillman (1978). Three weeks was allotted for agents to respond. Non-respondents were contacted by telephone and asked to complete and return the questionnaire. A total of 116 (response rate = 80.50%) responded by the cut-off date, which was two weeks after the follow-up phone call to non-respondents.

Data Analysis

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the data for the first three objectives. For the fourth objective, the Borich model (1979) was utilized to calculate Needs Scores. The Borich model produces need scores by subtracting the perceived performance (or use) score from the perceived qualification score, and then multiplying the result by the mean perceived qualification score. (Competence - Use) * Φ Competence = Need Score.

For the fifth objective, in order to analyze relationships, Pearson correlation

coefficients were calculated for the demographic variables with the four categories and 18 phases of the GEMS Model. Point biserial correlation coefficients for parameters were calculated for gender and Extension area with the 18 phases and four categories of the GEMS Model. Spearman rank order correlation coefficients were calculated for level of education with the four categories and 18 phases of the GEMS Model.

Results

Demographically, the “typical” 4-H Agent in Kentucky may be described as a 36 year old female with a completed Bachelor’s degree. She had 10 years of experience as a 4-H Youth Development Agent in Kentucky, a half year of experience in another state, and 11 years of experience as a volunteer administrator/coordinator (most of which is Extension experience). She served in three volunteer positions outside of Extension and coordinated 272 volunteers annually, with 227 being adult and 45 being youth volunteers. The only 4-H Agent working in a county,

she was a 4-H member or participant for five years.

The 4-H Agents indicated their three phases of greatest competency to be Providing Resources (mean = 6.16), Recognizing (mean = 6.14) and Engaging (mean = 6.04) yielding a mean rating of “qualified.” Conversely, Disengaging (mean = 4.64) was the least competent phase, yielding a mean rating of “somewhat qualified” according to the agents (Table 1).

Respondents indicated that they most frequently Provide Resources to volunteers (mean = 6.46), Recognize volunteers (mean = 6.31) and Engage volunteers (mean = 6.06). 4-H Agents spend the least amount of time in the Disengaging phase (mean = 3.79). On an eight point Likert-type scale, the overall mean frequency of use for the 18 phases was 5.09 (Table 1).

The Borich Model (1979) was utilized to calculate the need score for each phase. Five phases had the greatest need score with negative values, including Providing Resources (mean = -1.85), Recognizing (mean = -1.02), Supervising (mean = -0.93), Recruiting (mean = -0.23) and Engaging (mean = -0.15) (Table 1).

Table 1
 Mean and Rank for Perceived Level of Competency, Frequency of Use, and Calculated Need Score for Each Phase of Volunteer Development.

Phase	Level of Comp. Mean	Level of Comp. Rank	Freq. of Use Mean	Freq. of Use Rank	Mean Need Score	Need Score Rank*
Needs Assessment	5.09	15	4.54	14	2.81	12
Position (Job) Description	5.12	13t	3.92	17	6.14	18
Identifying	5.71	6	5.40	6t	1.76	11
Recruiting	5.78	5	5.82	5	-0.23	4
Screening	5.12	13t	4.39	15	3.70	14
Selecting	5.48	9	5.40	6t	0.40	6
Orienting	5.69	7	4.89	10	4.57	17
Protecting	4.96	16	4.67	12	1.46	10
Providing Resources	6.16	1	6.46	1	-1.85	1
Teaching	5.39	10	4.62	13	4.15	16
Engaging	6.04	3	6.06	3	-0.15	5
Motivating	5.32	11	5.07	9	1.29	9
Supervising	5.79	4	5.95	4	-0.93	3
Evaluating	4.86	17	4.10	16	3.69	13
Recognizing	6.14	2	6.31	2	-1.02	2
Retaining	5.56	8	5.38	8	0.98	7
Redirect	5.16	12	4.87	11	1.26	8
Disengaging	4.64	18	3.79	18	3.94	15
	Range = 1.52		Range = 2.67		Range = 7.99	

* Need Score = (Competency - Use) * Φ Competency

The findings indicated that 4-H Agents perceived their level of competence to be greatest for the Mobilize category (mean = 5.72), followed by Educate (mean = 5.55), Generate (mean = 5.39) and Sustain (mean = 5.27). Respondents also rated the frequency of use similarly with the Mobilize category (mean = 5.70) having the

greatest use, followed by Educate (mean = 6.16), Generate (mean = 4.91) and Sustain (mean = 4.90). The Mobilize category also had the greatest calculated need score of 0.10. The Sustain category was second with a need score of 1.92, followed by Educate (2.17) and Generate (2.56) (Table 2).

Table 2

Mean and Rank for Perceived Level of Competency, Frequency of Use and Calculated Need Score for Each Category of Volunteer Development.

Category	Level of Comp. Mean	Level of Comp. Rank	Freq. of Use Mean	Freq. of Use Rank	Mean Need Score	Need Score Rank
Generate	5.39	3	4.91	3	2.56	4
Educate	5.55	2	5.16	2	2.17	3
Mobilize	5.72	1	5.70	1	0.10	1
Sustain	5.27	4	4.90	4	1.92	2

Note. (Competency - Use) * Φ Competency = Need Score.

The fifth objective was to determine if a relationship existed between population parameters and Agent's perceptions of their level of competency and frequency of use of the 18 phases and four categories of volunteer administration. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated for age, number of years as a 4-H Youth Development Agent in Kentucky, number of years as a 4-H Youth Development Agent in another state other than Kentucky, number of years as a volunteer administrator and number of volunteer positions currently being served with the perceived level of competence of the 18 volunteer development phases. Correlation

coefficients were interpreted as described by Davis (1971).

The relationship between demographic parameters and level of competence and frequency of use of the 18 phases and four categories of the GEMS Model (Culp, et al, 1998), although generally significant, were found to be negligible or low in most cases (Davis, 1971). There was a moderate positive association between the number of years served as a volunteer administrator and the Recruiting phase ($r = .313$) for level of competence (Table 3). A moderate positive association was found between the number of years served as a 4-H Agent in Kentucky and the Educate category ($r = .303$) for level of competence (Table 4).

Table 3
Pearson Correlation Coefficients Calculated Between Demographic Parameters with the Perceived Level of Competence of the 18 Volunteer Development Phases

Volunteer Development Phases	Age	Yrs. as 4-H Agent in Kentucky	Yrs. as 4-H Agent in other state	Years as Volunteer Administration	Volunteer Position Currently Served
Needs Assessment	.192*	.196*	.174	.263**	.269**
Job Description	.077	.089	.109	.117	.171
Identifying	.098	.182	.246**	.198*	.248**
Recruiting	.232*	.274**	.201*	.313**	.187*
Screening	.099	.100	.241**	.151	.085
Selecting	.192*	.214*	.179	.268**	.135
Orienting	.042	.178	.228*	.199*	.135
Protecting	.028	.150	.185*	.154	.161
Resources	.170	.276**	.113	.282**	.148
Teaching	.086	.219*	.019	.220*	.108
Engaging	.168	.227*	.097	.266**	.170
Motivating	-.002	.081	.032	.112	.122
Supervising	.093	.187*	.196*	.219*	.125
Evaluating	-.092	.089	.024	.064	.189*
Recognizing	.019	.081	.063	.126	.155
Retaining	.042	.141	.082	.219*	.190*
Redirecting	.013	.160	.118	.195*	.124
Disengaging	.023	.155	.026	.166	.149

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Table 4

Pearson Correlation Coefficients Calculated Between Demographic Parameters with the Perceived Level of Competence of the Four Volunteer Administration Categories

Volunteer Administration Categories	Age	Years as 4-H Agent in Kentucky	Years as 4-H Agent in Another State	Years as Volunteer Administration	Volunteer Positions Currently Served
Generate	.247**	.245**	.021	.244**	.163
Educate	.184	.303**	-.001	.271**	.090
Mobilize	.043	.179	.006	.151	.086
Sustain	.019	.200*	-.053	.163	.150

* Correlation is significant at the .05 level (2-tailed)

** Correlation is significant at the .01 level (2-tailed)

Discussion

The first objective of the study was to describe the demographic characteristics of University of Kentucky 4-H Youth Development Agents. The "typical" 4-H Agent in Kentucky was in the mid-life/career stage and was familiar with 4-H as a previous 4-H member. The typical agent began Extension employment at 26 years of age and previously worked one year in volunteer administration another field. The agent was the only 4-H agent in the county, coordinated all of the volunteers and was actively involved in the community.

The typical Agent in Kentucky was nearly identical to that of an Ohio agent as described by Deppe & Culp (2001) except for their level of education; Ohio 4-H Agents were required to complete a Master's degree, Kentucky Agents were required to hold a Bachelor's degree, at a minimum.

In 1992-93, a comprehensive survey (Brudney, Love & Yu, 1993) of the Association of Volunteer Administration (AVA) found the typical AVA member to be demographically characterized as: (a) predominately white, female and middle-aged; (b) receiving no training in volunteer management before entering the field; (c) appreciating further training opportunities, especially at the advanced level; (d) having been in their current position about five years, in the organization

for seven, and earning between \$20,000 and \$35,000; (e) spending 70% of their time on the job on volunteer administration; and (f) directly supervising an average of ninety-six volunteers. Lack of time was recognized as the greatest obstacle to making better use of research on volunteerism and volunteer administration.

The typical Kentucky 4-H Agent (volunteer administrator) is similar to the typical AVA member as both are middle-aged white females. However, Kentucky 4-H Agents have been in their position for 10 years, while the AVA member had only five years experience in their position. Additionally, the typical Kentucky 4-H Agent coordinates 272 volunteers as compared with 96 volunteers coordinated by the typical AVA member.

Kentucky 4-H Agents have twice as many years of experience in volunteer administration and coordinate three times the number of volunteers as do AVA members. This is an advantage in terms of greater job stability for Extension, but also means the Agent is likely to need additional support from supervisors and state staff in coordinating the efforts of nearly 300 volunteers.

The second objective of this study was to explore and describe how Kentucky 4-H/ Youth Development Agents perceive their level of competence for each of the 18 phases and four categories of volunteer development

as identified in the GEMS Model. The descending order of the perceived level of competence for the 18 phases were Providing Resources, Recognizing, Engaging, Supervising, Recruiting, Identifying, Orienting, Retaining, Selecting, Teaching, Motivating, Redirecting, Screen, Job Description, Needs Assessment, Protecting, Evaluating and Disengaging. The descending ranked order of the perceived level of competence for the four categories was Mobilize, Educate, Generate and Sustain.

Agent competence scores were the greatest for Providing Resources which is an ongoing process as all 4-H volunteers receive resources. The task of providing resources, however, is often performed by a support staff member. Therefore, agents may not receive questions from volunteers which may provide agents with a false sense of both security and feeling of competence. Further down in the ranking, agents reported lower competence levels for screening, position (job) description and conducting a needs assessment. Developing state-wide screening and volunteer liability policies and providing agent in-service professional development opportunities should assist in raising competence levels in these phases.

Disengaging was found to be the least competent phase. At the time of this study, little disengagement was occurring in Kentucky as volunteers usually disengage themselves rather than being terminated by professional staff. Agents often avoid disengaging volunteers and see disengagement as a sign of professional failure.

Overall, 4-H agents generally had similar scores in all phases and categories when comparing mean competence scores. Mean scores for level of competence clustered around the mid-point of the Likert-type scale with a rating of somewhat qualified, moderately qualified or qualified. Agents did not rate themselves as being extremely qualified or highly qualified in any aspect of volunteer administration. Additional professional development activities are therefore likely needed in all aspects of volunteer administration in order to improve competency scores.

The third objective of this study was to

explore and describe how Kentucky 4-H/ Youth Development Agents perceive their frequency of use for each of the 18 phases and four categories as identified in GEMS. The ranked order of the perceived frequency of use for the 18 phases are Providing Resources, Recognizing, Engaging, Supervising, Recruiting, Identifying, Selecting, Retaining, Motivating, Orienting, Redirecting, Protecting, Teaching, Needs Assessment, Screening, Evaluating, Job Description, Disengaging. The ranked order of the perceived frequency of use of the four categories are Mobilize, Educate, Generate, and Sustain.

This rank order of the perceived frequency of use is very comparable to the rank order of the perceived level of competence both with the individual phases and the broad categories of the GEMS Model. This could indicate that Agents utilize the volunteer administration skills for which they have developed competence and are comfortable using. However, while the rank order for frequency of use was similar to that of competence, the scores had more fluctuation and a wider range of distribution across the scale.

Deppe and Culp (2001) reported that Ohio 4-H Agents ranked the order for the 18 phases of GEMS for their perceived frequency of use as Providing Resources, Orienting, Selecting, Recognizing, Screening, Engaging, Teaching, Protecting, Recruiting, Motivating, Supervising, Retaining, Disengaging, Job Description, Identifying, Redirecting, Needs Assessment and Evaluating. The categories were ranked as Educate, Mobilize, Generate and Sustain according to the perceived frequency of use. In the Ohio study (Deppe & Culp) the Educate category received the highest ranking, whereas the Educate category was ranked second in the Kentucky study. This may be due to greater emphasis being placed on educating volunteers in the Ohio 4-H program. Several Ohio counties instituted mandatory annual continuing education requirements for volunteers, reiterating the greater emphasis placed on volunteer education in Ohio. Additionally, Ohio coordinates the Ohio 4-H Volunteer Conference (OVC), an annual event whose attendance ranges from 1400 to 1804.

Conversely, Kentucky coordinates the Kentucky 4-H Volunteer Forum (KVF), a biannual event with attendance averaging 752. It would appear that greater state-wide emphasis is placed on volunteer development and education in Ohio when compared to Kentucky.

The rank orders of the 18 phases in the two studies (Ohio and Kentucky) have many similarities. Seven volunteer administration phases (Providing Resources, Recognizing, Engaging, Recruiting, Selecting, Motivating and Orienting) appear in the top ten of both studies as frequently used by agents in both Kentucky and Ohio. Furthermore, the top three most frequently used phases in each state's study are in the top ten of the other state's study. Five volunteer administration phases (Redirecting, Needs Assessment, Evaluating, Job Description and Disengaging) were ranked at the end of the list in both the Kentucky and Ohio studies. Likewise, the last three phases for each ranked list of each state's study are located in the bottom half of the other state's study. The rank order of the categories are nearly identical except that Kentucky 4-H Agents more frequently use the Motivate category while Ohio 4-H Agents most frequently use the Educate category.

The fourth objective of this study was to determine what, if any, differences exist between 4-H Agents' perceptions of the level of competence and frequency of use of each of the 18 phases and four categories of volunteer development, as outlined by the GEMS Model. The difference between the level of competence and frequency of use was utilized to calculate a perceived need score. The rank order of the need scores of the 18 GEMS phases and the four larger GEMS categories was very similar to the order of both the perceived level of competence and perceived frequency of use. This would be expected with nearly identical orders between the perceived level of competence and perceived frequency of use. In general, 4-H Agents are competent in phases they use and only use a phase to the extent they feel qualified to do so. Therefore, in order to increase frequency of use, agent's perceptions of their own competence levels need to be increased. This could be accomplished through in-service education,

introduction of volunteer administration tools and professional development opportunities.

An important question to address in further research is "do agents develop competency in the 18 volunteer development phases based upon their frequency of use or do agents only use those phases in which they have developed skills and knowledge?" Does competency drive use or does frequency of use drive competency? Competence score exceeds frequency of use score in thirteen of the 18 GEMS phases and in all four categories. It could, therefore be concluded that Agents won't use a volunteer administration skill until they feel competent.

The fifth objective was to determine if a relationship exists between population parameters and agent's perceptions of their level of competence and frequency of use of the 18 phases and four categories of volunteer development. Pearson correlation coefficients were calculated for demographic variables with the perceived level of competence and frequency of use of the 18 volunteer development phases and four categories. Conclusions can be drawn from some statistically significant correlations ($P < .05$). The older the 4-H agents become, the more competent they become and the more frequently they use the Needs Assessment, Recruiting and Selecting phases. The more years experienced as a 4-H agent and as a volunteer administrator, the more competent agents become and the more frequently they use Recruiting and the categories of Generate and Educate. Agents also have greater competency and frequency of use of Needs Assessment when they serve on many volunteer positions.

Spearman rank order correlations were calculated for level of education with the perceived level of competence of the four categories and 18 volunteer development phases. The greater an agent's level of education, the greater the level of competence and frequency of use of the Educate category with the particular phases of Providing Resources, Orienting and Protecting. Therefore, education plays a large part in meeting some of the needs of agents by utilizing the volunteer administration phases in the Educate category to develop their volunteer resource base.

Implications for 4-H/Youth Development

1. Many programs which are 4-H agent-driven could be volunteer-driven if additional resources were developed which would support 4-H volunteer efforts. These resources could focus on generating, educating, mobilizing and sustaining volunteers.
2. Agents were found to generally use a skill as frequently as they felt competent to do so. Mean need scores were lower for frequency of use for 12 of the 18 phases and all four categories than were the competence scores. Mean need scores were higher than were the need scores for competence on the six highest ranking frequency of use scores. Additional professional development activities should, therefore, focus on improving competence in these GEMS phases.
3. When planning for individual professional development activities, Kentucky 4-H Agents should address those phases with negative need scores in order to prioritize those phases which need immediate attention. These include Providing Resources, Recognizing, Supervising, Recruiting and Engaging. Negative scores result from those phases which have higher scores for frequency of use than for competency.
4. When planning for state-wide professional development workshops for 4-H Youth Development Agents, state specialists should focus on those phases which yielded negative need scores in order to increase overall competency levels among field staff in volunteer administration.
5. Agents with higher levels of education were reported to have higher levels of competency in Orienting, Protecting, Position (Job) Description, Needs Assessment, Providing Resources and Teaching. All these phases are in the Generate and Educate categories and this list contains all four of the phases in the Educate category. Therefore, it is recommended that the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service consider requiring 4-H/Youth Development Agents to pursue a graduate degree as a means of increasing their level of competence in volunteer administration.
6. Kentucky 4-H Agents need to seek ways of securing tools/resources to use in volunteer administration that will foster greater levels of competency in those phases which are currently under utilized. The relationship between population parameters and perceptions held of the competency and frequency of use of the 18 phases and four categories of volunteer development were almost all found to be either negligible or low associations in all cases. Therefore, even though some 4-H Agents had more experience, a greater number of years of service or were older, that did not positively correlate with a higher competence score in any phase or category of volunteer administration. Therefore, all 4-H Agents should become the target audience for professional development of educational tools/resources for volunteer administration.
7. Kentucky 4-H/Youth Development Agents need volunteer development tools to utilize in their daily professional life since competency mean scores were somewhat stable with less variation and the correlations were lower than were the frequency of use correlations. Agents need tools which aid in assessing needs, developing position descriptions, identifying target volunteer audiences, recruiting prospective volunteers, selecting the most qualified volunteers and screening applicants are a few examples. Agents are likely to utilize volunteer administration tools in their professional lives which should also increase their level of competency as volunteer administrators.
8. Agents could learn to utilize the volunteer administration tools through participation in a volunteer

administration in-service series. This in-service or series would also assist agents in developing competency in these areas. A GEMS Toolbox containing tools and educational resources in volunteer administration would benefit agents and improve both their levels of competence and frequency of use. As demographic characteristics were found to be of little importance in determining differences in competence of volunteer administration, all 4-H/Youth Development Agents could benefit by its utilization.

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