

The Benefits of FFA Membership as Part of Agricultural Education

Chelsea Rose¹, Carrie A. Stephens², Christopher Stripling³, Tim Cross⁴, Danielle E. Sanok⁵, and Shelby Brawner⁶

Abstract

The study sought to identify the benefits of FFA membership based on the fulfillment of three basic human needs: love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. The study focused on the fulfillment of FFA members' basic human needs as defined by Abraham Maslow. The three needs on which this study focused are: love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. The study found a majority of FFA members' three basic human needs are met due to their involvement in career development events, leadership positions, and other FFA activities. Of all research questions, the highest concentration of members claimed to have a more enjoyable high school experience as a result of their membership in the FFA. Future research should focus on determining how the FFA improves the high school experience. This research could be helpful to other career and technical education organizations and future success within the FFA. Moreover, linking the relevance of meeting Maslow's basic human needs with active participation in student organizations could assist teachers and program advisors as they recruit and retain members.

Keywords: FFA, Agricultural Education

Introduction

Positive youth development is crucial for a progressive, modern society (Lerner, 2009). Many youth organizations provide students with opportunities to enhance their knowledge and employability skills through various classroom exercises that incorporate real-world applications (Zinkle & Connors, 2003). One of the largest youth organizations, The National FFA Organization, provides countless opportunities for positive youth development in public school (National FFA

¹ Chelsea Rose is the Executive Director of the Tennessee FFA Foundation, Inc. Box 5034, Tennessee Tech University, Cookeville, TN 38505-000, chelsearose@tnffa.org

² Carrie A. Stephens is a Professor of Agricultural Leadership in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications at the University of Tennessee, 2621 Morgan Circle, 320 Morgan Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996, cfritz@utk.edu

³ Christopher Stripling is an Assistant Professor of Agricultural Education in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications at the University of Tennessee, 2621 Morgan Circle, 320 Morgan Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996, cstripli@utk.edu

⁴Tim Cross is the Dean of University of Tennessee Extension, 2621 Morgan Circle, 120 Morgan Hall

⁵ Danielle Sanok is an Agricultural Education Teacher at McGavock High School, 3150 McGavock Pike, Nashville, TN37214, dsanok@utk.edu

⁶ Shelby Browner is a Graduate Teaching Assistant in the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education & Communications at the University of Tennessee, 2621 Morgan Circle, 320 Morgan Hall, Knoxville, TN 37996 ssummare@utk.edu

Organization, 2010). The National FFA Organization is a student-led youth organization designed to promote positive youth development by engaging youth in leadership activities, which are focused on careers in agriculture (National FFA Organization, 2003). The FFA is also founded on the principles of providing members with opportunities to further agricultural leadership, cooperation, and citizenship (Townsend & Carter, 1983). In addition, the partnership between the FFA and agricultural education strives to prepare its members for successful careers and provide valuable resources for individuals to make a lifetime of informed choices in global agriculture, food, fiber, and natural resources (National FFA Organization, 2013).

Members of the FFA are enrolled in agricultural education, which consists of three interconnected areas: classroom instruction, experiential learning, and leadership education (National Association of Agricultural Educators, 2015). Students, who are enrolled in agricultural courses have the opportunity to be involved in experiential learning through their Supervised Agriculture Experience (SAE) projects, and participate in leadership education activities through the FFA (National Association of Agricultural Educators, 2015). Previous research highlighted some benefits obtained by being involved in the FFA. Some of those benefits are the opportunity to reach personal goals, engage in meaningful activities, as well as increase self-esteem, cognitive needs, and self-actualization (Croom & Flowers, 2001a). Croom and Flowers (2001b) also indicated students' join the FFA to meet their need for sense of belonging and self-esteem. Furthermore, Bird, Henry, and Phelps (2012) agreed students enjoy the FFA because they want to be a part of something important, which fuels the need for sense of belonging. Through FFA participation, students achieve their different needs through personal gains in public speaking, working with others, life skills, and skills transferrable for college (Bird, Phelps, & Henry, 2012). However, over 900,000 students are enrolled in agricultural education, but only 600,000 participate in the FFA (National FFA Organization, 2015). Without membership in the FFA, agricultural education students are not experiencing the full benefits of leadership education. According to Croom and Flowers (2001c), students decide to join the FFA during one of the most challenging stages in life, teenage adolescence, where their need for sense of belonging, intimacy and love are heightened. Understanding this stage of life could help postulate the reasons for why students choose to enroll in agriculture education, but not the FFA.

As a person progresses through different life stages, his or her sense of belonging to a group becomes imperative (Maslow, 1943). Most individuals long for affectionate relations with other people and a place in a group. Securing a position within a group can build feelings of love and belonging, further leaving individuals with the need for self-respect or self-esteem. By gaining self-respect or self-esteem, one can develop a sense of strength and confidence. Even when the need for love, sense of belonging, and self-esteem are met, Maslow indicated an individual may still seem restless if he/she does not feel they are reaching his/her fullest potential (Maslow, 1943). Therefore, given the analysis from Maslow, both youth and adults need to have an environment where physiological, safety, love, self-esteem, and the sense of belonging needs can be met and also have the opportunity to progress through the hierarchy of needs to establish fulfillment in life.

Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) postulated how people are motivated to meet and achieve certain needs. Maslow outlined the eight levels of needs humans share as they grow and develop through life. However, there are four basic human needs: physiological, safety, love, and self-esteem. Once an individual has met the four basic needs, then an individual can focus on developing the higher needs areas: need to know and understand, aesthetic, self-actualization, and transcendence (see Figure 1).

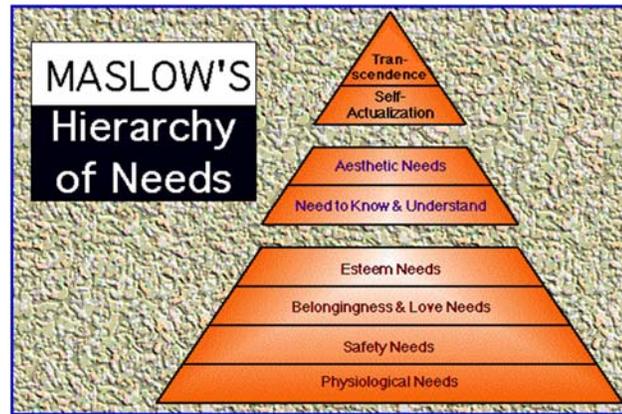


Figure 1. Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs. Huitt, W. (2007). *Educational Psychology Interactive*. Valdosta, GA: Valdosta State University. Retrieved from <http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/topics/regsys/maslow.html>

People throughout their life are motivated to achieve certain needs within the hierarchy, and when one need is fulfilled, a person seeks to achieve the next set of needs. Before a person can progress towards meeting higher growth needs, they must first satisfy lower level basic needs. When basic needs are unmet, two things can happen. First, people become more motivated to fulfill their basic needs, and second, the longer a person is without their basic needs, their need to fulfill those needs becomes stronger (Maslow, 1943). According to Maslow (1943), every person is capable and has the desire to achieve the top of the hierarchy of needs of self-actualization and transcendence. Few people actually achieve self-actualization because life events (e. g. divorce, death, loss of job) can cause fluctuation of achievement within the hierarchy of needs. Furthermore, Maslow (1943) purported every person's needs progress differently and at different stages of life.

In accordance with Maslow's theory of needs fluctuating based on a person's life stages, Croom and Flowers (2001c) indicated students become eligible to join the FFA when they are entering one of the most vulnerable stages of human growth and development. During this stage in life, students need and long for contact, intimacy, and sense of belonging (Croom & Flowers, 2001c). Furthermore, Townsend and Carter (1983) found FFA members who attended local, state, and national events had higher perceptions of personal development and recommended members be continuously encouraged to attend conferences and events to strengthen leadership competencies. However, when examining the statistics in Tennessee, there is a discrepancy in the students enrolled in agricultural education and not the FFA. According to Tennessee FFA Association's (2013) data, approximately 33,500 secondary students are enrolled in agricultural education. However, only 13,644 students are dues paying members of the National FFA Organization (Tennessee FFA, 2013). Thus, 19,856 Tennessee agricultural education students are only participating in the classroom instruction and SAE components of the agricultural education program (National Association of Agricultural Educators, 2013) and are not taking advantage of the leadership component (FFA) of the agricultural education program.

Students within the FFA (National FFA Organization, 2003) are regularly exposed to opportunities for engagement within the organization. However, it is unclear what benefits FFA members receive beyond travel, scholarships, recognition, and awards. This study investigated how students' basic human needs are being fulfilled through involvement in the FFA in Tennessee.

Purpose and Objectives

The study sought to identify the benefits of FFA membership based on the fulfillment of three basic human needs: love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization. The following research objectives gave structure to the research and answered the guiding question in organized detail:

1. Determine if FFA members are developing feelings of love and belonging while active in the FFA.
2. Describe FFA members' self-esteem as it relates to their FFA involvement.
3. Assess FFA members' development of self-actualization through participation in the FFA.

Methods and Procedures

The research is quantitative in nature and relies on the perspective of FFA members (Ary, Jacobs, & Sorensen, 2010). Specifically, this research sought to understand the benefits of the FFA through descriptive surveys completed by students attending Tennessee FFA Camp. A survey method was chosen because surveys were more easily distributed among students at FFA camp who do not have computer access.

Subjects

The target population (Ary et al., 2010) for this study was Tennessee FFA members who are enrolled in at least one agricultural education course on the secondary level. FFA membership is implicit due to their participation at Camp Clements FFA Leadership Training Camp. Notice was given to students' guardians that the survey would be taken at FFA camp. They were also notified that participation in the survey was optional.

The sampling frame (Ary et al., 2010) for this study was students in high schools in each of Tennessee's three regions. These regions represent each of Tennessee's three grand divisions: West, Middle, and East. In this study, the sampling frame included 50 – 100 students from each of the six weeks of the FFA camp. Convenience sampling was also most sensible to utilize due to the fact that the entire population could not be surveyed and each week of the FFA Camp hosts chapters from each of the three regions of the FFA (Ary et al., 2010).

Students were made aware that their participation was voluntary when the surveys were issued. There were 394 students who participated in the study. Of those participating, 0.3% were incoming high school freshman; 33.8% were incoming high school sophomores; 34.0% were incoming high school juniors; 29.9% were incoming high school seniors; 1.5% were immediate high school graduates. Nearly (96%) all research participants had participated in at least one career development event.

The sample consisted of 37.1% male and 62.7% female members, as well as, 2.5% African-American, 8.6% Hispanic, 86.3% white, non-Hispanic, and 2.6% other ethnicities. According to the National FFA Organization (2014), 67% of the membership, nationally, is white, non-Hispanic; 22% is Hispanic; 8% is African-American or American Indian, and 3% represent other races.

Length of membership in the FFA within the sample included: 32.7% first-year members, 30.5% second-year members, 25.9% third-year members, 10.4% fourth-year members, and 0.3% fifth-year members. Nationally, 5% of FFA members are currently enrolled

in grades 7-8; 91% of FFA members are currently enrolled in grades 9-12; 4% have already graduated from high school and may be engaged in postsecondary studies (National FFA Organization, 2014). Of the members surveyed 40.6% live on a farm; 59.4% do not live on a farm.

Instrumentation

The instrument was created using Maslow's (1943) basic human needs of love and belonging, self-esteem, and self-actualization as a basis for each question. The other two needs: physiological and safety and security were not evaluated in this study. Quite simply, the two lower needs are not easily measurable through written surveys and may not be fully applicable in the question of the benefits of FFA membership.

Three objectives guided the development of survey questions. Objective one was to determine if FFA members are developing feelings of love and belonging while active in the FFA. The questions that measured objective one were Question 1a and 2a: ability to work with others, appreciation for agriculture; Question 1b and 2b: recognition; Question 2: leadership positions; Question 4: high school more enjoyable, remain dedicated to school, ability to make friends, a place to call "home", FFA favorite activity; Question 4a: motivates to attend school, remain active in school; and Question 4b: participation in FFA events after-school.

Objective two was to describe FFA members' self-esteem as it relates to their FFA involvement. The questions that measured objective two were Questions 1a and 2a: confidence and ability to speak publicly; Questions 1b and 2b: recognition; Question 1e: participate without pressure, when failed advisor was not upset, more likely to try new things; and Question 3: realize value in college education, realize value in technical training, and more likely to pursue college or technical training

Objective three was to assess FFA members' development of self-actualization through participation in the FFA. The questions that measured objective three were Question 1: gauge student participation in the FFA to allow for deductions regarding the development of self-actualization in subsequent survey questions; Questions 1a and 2a: desire for improvement, desire to set and achieve goals; Questions 1c and 2c: attained knowledge, test skill-level, skill-level improved; Question 3a: plan to pursue college education (4-year), plan to pursue college education (2-year), plan to pursue technical training, plan to enter workforce; Question 3b: self-discipline, reaching goals, remaining dedicated to goals, appreciation for learning; and Question 4c: maintain a GPA, do not want to disappoint advisor with below average grades, below average grades may prevent FFA activity.

Prior to disseminating the survey, face and content validity of the instrument were established through review by an expert panel (Ary et al., 2010), which consisted of two faculty members and one administrator at the University of Tennessee. This panel included two faculty members from the Department of Agricultural Leadership, Education and Communications and the Dean of Extension. Reliability was determined through the use of cognitive interviews (Dillman, Smyth, & Melani, 2010). Cognitive interviewing is used to determine "whether respondents comprehend questions as intended by the survey sponsor and whether questions can be answered accurately" (Dillman et al., 2010, p. 142). Based on the feedback from the expert panel, changes were made to the instrument. Data collected for objectives one through three were analyzed utilizing descriptive statistics.

Results

The results of the survey are organized by objectives (where totals do not equal 100%, students opted not to answer). Objective one focused on determining if FFA members are developing feelings of love and belonging while actively participating in the FFA. The results in Table 1 show more than 80% of students surveyed agreed either their participation in career development events or leadership roles have strengthened their appreciation for agriculture.

Table 1

Participants Skills Relating to Love and Belonging Needs (n=394)

Skills	Percentage Disagree	Percentage Agree	Percentage Unsure
Appreciation for agriculture gained through career development event	0.8	89.1	3.0
Ability to work with others gained through career development event	1.5	84.0	7.1
Appreciation for agriculture gained through leadership position(s)	0.5	82.5	3.6
Ability to work with others gained through leadership position(s)	0.3	81.5	4.3

Table 2 highlights survey results showing the FFA makes the high school experience more enjoyable, motivates students to remain dedicated and active to their schoolwork, enhances their ability to make friends, gives them a place to call “home” (e.g. sense of belonging), and provokes students to attend school. Approximately, 89.6% of students agree the FFA has given them a place to call “home” within their school. Additionally, 96.2% of students agree that the FFA has made their high school experience more enjoyable.

Table 2

Participants School Engagement Relating to Love and Belonging Needs (n=394)

Statements	Percentage Disagree	Percentage Agree	Percentage Unsure
FFA has made my high school experience more enjoyable.	0.5	96.2	2.3
FFA has helped me remain dedicated to school.	4.3	87.1	7.4
FFA has given me the ability to make friends at my school.	0.5	93.4	4.8
FFA has given me a place to call “home” within my school.	2.3	89.6	7.1
FFA is among my favorite activities at school.	0.5	95.2	3.3
FFA motivates me to attend school.	5.6	85.0	6.6
FFA is at least part of the reason why I remain active at my school.	9.1	81.0	6.6

Table 3 exhibits how survey participants responded regarding confidence gained and their public speaking abilities. Students were asked to indicate the confidence and speaking abilities gained through career development events and leadership positions. For example, FFA members felt they were more confident by participating in leadership positions within the FFA (78.9%) and also gained a significant amount of confidence from participating in career development events (82.5%).

Table 3

Participants Skills Relating to Self-Esteem Needs (n=394)

Skills	Percentage Disagree	Percentage Agree	Percentage Unsure
Confidence gained through participation in career development events	1.8	82.5	7.4
Ability to speak publicly gained through participation in career development events	6.1	72.3	13.2
Confidence gained through participation in leadership position(s)	0.9	78.9	5.8
Ability to speak publicly gained through participation in leadership position(s)	3.6	71.1	11.2

Table 4 shows survey responses measuring student self-esteem by asking about the pressure to succeed, how their advisor(s) react to failure, and how likely students are to try new things. In addition, FFA members were more eager to try new things because of their participation in career development events (81.7%).

Table 4

Participants Participation Relating to Self-Esteem Needs (n=394)

Statements	Percentage Disagree	Percentage Agree	Percentage Unsure
I was able to participate in career development events without a high amount of pressure to	11.7	59.1	19.8
When I failed in a career development event, my advisor was not upset.	12.2	64.7	13.7
I am more likely to try new things due to my participation in career	1.3	81.7	6.9

Table 5 highlights a majority of students surveyed have realized the value in a college education and technical training. Furthermore, most students agreed they are more likely to pursue higher education as result of their involvement with the FFA (80.5%).

Table 5

Participants Realization of Value in Education Relating to Self-Esteem Needs (n=394)

Statements	Percentage Disagree	Percentage Agree	Percentage Unsure
My involvement with FFA has helped me realize the value in a college education.	3.8	84.8	6.9
My involvement with FFA has helped me realize the value in technical training. (Auto-diesel,	5.3	73.1	16.2
I am more likely to attend college or pursue technical training as a result of my FFA	6.1	80.5	8.1

Table 6 shows student responses to questions relating to desire for improvement and setting and achieving goals. Results show more than 80% of students surveyed want to improve and have a greater desire to set and achieve goals as a result of their FFA membership.

Table 6

Participants Improvement and Goal-Setting Related to Self-Actualization Needs (n=394)

Skills	Percentage Disagree	Percentage Agree	Percentage Unsure
Desire for improvement gained through participation in career development events	1.3	86.0	4.8
Desire to set and achieve goals gained through participation in career	0.8	84.8	6.6
Desire for improvement gained through participation in leadership role(s)	0.8	81.7	3.8
Desire to set and achieve goals gained through participation in leadership	0.5	81.7	3.8

In Table 7, results indicate more than 70% of students agreed they attained knowledge and tested and improved their skill-level while participating in career development events or leadership positions. Specifically, 86% of members surveyed agreed their skill-level was improved through participation in career development events.

Table 7

Participants Learning and Development Related to Self-Actualization Needs (n=394)

Statements	Percentage Disagree	Percentage Agree	Percentage Unsure
I attained knowledge through participating in career development events.	0.5	87.1	3.8
I was given the opportunity to test my skill-level through participation in career	0.8	84.8	5.6
My skill-level was improved through participation in career development events.	0.3	86.0	4.3
I attained knowledge through participating in a leadership position(s).	1.5	74.6	6.6
I was given the opportunity to test my skill-level through participation in a	2.0	72.6	8.1
My skill-level was improved through participation in leadership position(s).	1.5	73.9	6.9

Finally, Table 8 shows how students improved their appreciation for self-discipline (92.9%), reaching goals (94.4%), remaining dedicated to goals (93.7%), learning from failure (91.6%), and learning new lessons, skills, or trades (93.1%). Fewer than 3% of the students responded they disagreed with the statements below.

Table 8

Participants Lessons Learned Relating to Self-Actualization Needs (n=394)

Statements	Percentage Disagree	Percentage Agree	Percentage Unsure
FFA has taught me or improved my appreciation for self-discipline.	1.3	92.9	3.8
FFA has taught me or improved my appreciation for the value of reaching my goals.	1.3	94.4	2.3
FFA has taught me or improved my appreciation for remaining dedicated to my	1.5	93.7	2.5
FFA has taught me or improved my appreciation for learning from failure.	2.3	91.6	4.1
FFA has taught me or improved my appreciation for learning new lessons, skills, or	1.5	93.1	3.0

Summary, Discussion, and Recommendations

Overall, the FFA provides students with a physical and emotional sense of belonging and does so by building the self-confidence and self-esteem within its members. Through Career Development Events (CDEs), leadership positions, and other responsibilities, FFA members are motivated to reach their fullest potential. In addition, Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1943) - love, belonging, self-esteem and self-actualization - are being met through FFA involvement.

Objective 1: Determine if FFA members are developing feelings of love and belonging while active in FFA.

Maslow (1943) indicated love and belonging are basic needs, which individuals strive for, especially when trying to establish a presence within a group. Participation in a group could help secure sense of belonging and position within a group (Maslow, 1943). Additionally, Croom and Flowers (2001b) and Bird, Henry, and Phelps (2012) agreed FFA members join the FFA to meet their need for sense of belonging. Students who participated in the survey overwhelmingly responded the FFA is a place where their need for belonging and love is being met. Moreover, a majority (89.6%) of the FFA members surveyed responded that the FFA has given them a place to call home within their school. A majority (93.4%) of members also responded the FFA has enhanced their ability to make friends. Each of these responses among others indicates FFA members are placed in an environment leading students to fulfill their basic human need of love and belonging.

Townsend and Carter (1983) purported FFA members who attend local, state, and national events have high perceptions of personal development as well as leadership competencies and encouraged members to continue to attend such events. Bird, Henry, and Phelps (2012) additionally found FFA participation in Career Development Events (CDEs), working with others, and public speaking opportunities allow students to learn new knowledge and skills, making students ready for careers and/or college. This study proved the FFA provides opportunities for individuals to fulfill the basic need of love and belonging through working on a team, creating relationships with team members during training, and traveling for CDE competition.

To help fulfill members' need of love and sense of belonging, we recommend advisors continue to encourage their students to participate and attend as many events on the local, state, and national level as possible. Advertising these opportunities to members will allow members to know and understand the long term benefits of FFA involvement, further increasing participation and FFA membership. This study found students long for these opportunities and local chapters should consider evaluating if the needs of their students are being met and what more advisors can do to increase the sense of love and belonging on the local level. Replication of this study should be conducted in other states across the nation to determine if these results are consistent among members or if areas of the country need assistance in increasing opportunities for members' sense of love and belonging.

Objective 2: Describe FFA members' self-esteem as it relates to their FFA involvement.

Maslow (1943) indicated self-esteem as a basic need of human beings, as self-esteem provides high evaluation and self-respect among individuals. Croom and Flowers (2001c) indicated the FFA allows members to reach their personal goals, engage in meaningful activities, and increase students' self-esteem. Each year, the FFA provides FFA members with over \$2 million in scholarship awards. This study asked FFA members if they have been recognized or have received any awards or scholarships for their accomplishments and their feelings surrounding their accomplishments. A majority of students surveyed indicated they have been recognized or honored at the local, regional, state, and/or national levels. The Tennessee FFA Association awards students on the local, sectional, regional, and state level (Tennessee FFA Association, 2013).

In accordance with Croom and Flowers (2001a), the majority (82.5%) of FFA members who responded stated they had gained confidence being involved in the FFA. A majority (81.7%) of members surveyed responded they feel more accomplished due to their participation

in CDEs. Furthermore, 84.8% of members agree their involvement with the FFA has helped them realize the value in a college education. Likewise, 73.1% of members surveyed realize the value in technical training due to FFA involvement. In a culmination of awareness of post-secondary educational opportunities and a development of self-esteem, a majority (80.5%) of FFA members surveyed responded they plan to enroll in college or pursue technical training.

To further members' rise in self-esteem, local advisors should consider continuing recognizing student efforts in the form of awards, scholarships, words of affirmation, and encouraging their students to exceed their potential. In addition, future research should be conducted to determine the lasting impact of the FFA and how involvement affects members' self-esteem long term. Future research should also be conducted to determine the areas in which members gain confidence and self-esteem by participating in the FFA so advisors and those who work for the FFA can further increase FFA members' confidence and self-esteem in those areas and strengthen areas of weakness.

Objective 3: Assess FFA members' development of self-actualization through participation in FFA.

Finally, self-actualization is described by Maslow (1943) as an individual's desire to exceed one's potential, becoming everything one is capable of achieving. Maslow also indicated self-actualization is difficult at times to achieve because of different life events and circumstances. Croom and Flowers (2001c) agreed by stating, students become eligible for FFA membership during one of the most difficult stages of life, teenage years. Both Maslow and Croom and Flowers (2001c) indicated an individual longs for contact, intimacy, and sense of belonging. The FFA provides these opportunities as well as the opportunity for self-actualization of participating members (Croom & Flowers, 2001a). The research questions in this study investigated students' expanded interest in career development and growth for potential career success. A majority of students stated they have higher aspirations for themselves as a result of their membership. Each of these benefits of FFA membership contributes to self-actualization.

Among the questions asked of the FFA members, Question 1.5 most closely related to a student's ability to achieve self-actualization through the FFA. In fact, a majority (59.1%) of members agreed they are able to participate in CDEs without a high amount of pressure to succeed. When asked if members felt more accomplished due to their participation in CDEs, 81.7% responded they indeed felt more accomplished. These results and others from the survey reveal students are given opportunities to achieve their full potential through the FFA and feel confident trying new things.

In order to continue to meet members' self-actualization needs, we recommend this study be replicated across the nation. We also recommend this study be conducted across all levels of membership (e.g. collegiate, alumni, honorary) to determine if the FFA impacts self-actualization throughout a member's life. Additionally, in order to continue member success and improve the FFA programming, we recommend future research to determine what specific CDEs and other FFA events contribute to self-actualization. This will help discover more specific interests of the members so the FFA programming can better benefit the interests of its members.

Overall, we recommend other student and youth-oriented organizations realize the importance of providing its members with opportunities to meet their basic human needs, therefore, replication of this study among other organizations is called for. By replicating this study, other student organizations can compare if their students have the same feelings towards

their respected organizations and what the organization can do to increase these needs among their members. Replication of this study should also be conducted on all levels of membership to determine if collegiate, alumni, and honorary members' need for self-actualization, love, self-esteem, and sense of belonging are being met throughout their life because of the FFA. Moreover, future research should focus on determining how the FFA improves the overall high school experience as this study only captured a portion of the positive impact the FFA has on the lives of its members.

References

- Ary, D., Jacobs, L. C., & Sorensen, C. (2010). *Introduction to research in education* (9th ed.). Belmont, CA: Wadsworth Cengage Learning.
- Bird, W., Henry A., & Phelps, K. (2012). Factors influencing or discouraging secondary School students' FFA participation. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 53 (2), 70-86.
doi:10.5032/jae.2012.02070
- Croom, D. B., & Flowers, J. L. (2001a). A question of relevance: FFA programs and services as perceived by FFA members and non-members. *Journal of Southern Agricultural Education Research*, 51(1), 6–19. Retrieved from <http://pubs.aged.tamu.edu/jsaer/toc51.html>
- Croom, D. B., & Flowers, J. L. (2001b). Finding and keeping members: Perspectives of FFA members and non-members on the effectiveness of FFA programs and services. *Proceedings of the 28th Annual National Agricultural Education Research Conference, New Orleans, LA*, 72-84.
- Croom, D. B., & Flowers, J. L. (2001c). Factors influencing an agricultural education student's perception of the FFA organization [Electronic version]. *Journal of Agricultural Education*, 42(2), 28-37.
- Dillman, D. A., Smyth, J. D., & Melani, L. (2010). *Internet, mail, and mixed-mode surveys: The tailored design method* (3rd ed.). Toronto, Canada: Wiley & Sons.
- Huitt, W. (2007). *Educational Psychology Interactive*. Valdosta, GA: Valdosta State University. Retrieved from <http://www.edpsycinteractive.org/topics/regsys/maslow.html>
- Maslow, A. H. (1943). A theory of human motivation. *Psychological Review*, 50, 370-396.
Retrieved from <http://www.researchhistory.org/2012/06/16/maslows-hierarchy-of-needs/>
- Lerner, R. (2009). The positive youth development perspective: Theoretical and empirical bases of strengths-based approach to adolescent development. In S. Lopez & C. Snyder (Eds.), *Oxford Handbook of Positive Psychology* (pp. 149–163). New York, NY: Oxford University Press.
- National Association of Agricultural Educators. (2013). *What is agricultural education?* Retrieved from <http://www.naae.org/teachag/about-ag-education.php>.
- National Association of Agricultural Educators (2015). *What is Agricultural Education?* Retrieved from <http://www.naae.org/whatisaged/>.
- National FFA Organization. (2003). *Blue jackets gold standards*. Evansville, IN: M.T. Publishing Company, Inc.
- National FFA Organization. (2010). *Official FFA manual*. Indianapolis, IN: National FFA Organization.

- National FFA Organization. (2013a). *Agricultural education*. Retrieved from <https://www.ffa.org/about/whoware/Pages/AgriculturalEducation.aspx>.
- National FFA Organization. (2014). *Who we are*. Retrieved from <https://www.ffa.org/about/whoware/Pages/Statistics.aspx>.
- National FFA Organization (2015). *FFA Fact Sheet*. Retrieved from www.ffa.org/about/media-center/ffa-fact-sheet.
- Tennessee FFA Association. (2013). *Who we are*. Retrieved from <https://www.tennesseeffa.org/page.aspx?ID=55>.
- Townsend, C., & Carter, R. (1983). The relationship of participation in FFA activities and leadership citizenship, and cooperation. *Journal of the American Association of Teacher Educators in Agriculture*, 24 (1), 20-25.
- Zirkle, C., & Connors, J. J. (2003). The contribution of career and technical student organizations (CTSO) to the development and assessment of workplace skills and knowledge: A literature review. *Workforce Education Forum*, 30(2), 15–26.