4-H STATE LEADERS’ READINESS TO SUPPORT LESBIAN AND GAY YOUTH-
ASSESSING LEADERS’ LESBIAN AND GAY KNOWLEDGE, HOMOPHOBIC
ATTITUDES, AND BEST PRACTICE IMPLEMENTATION

Dissertation

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By

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ABSTRACT

This study builds upon Cooperative Extension’s diversity efforts by considering 4-H state leaders’ readiness to support lesbian and gay youth. Forty-seven (64%) of the 74 addressees on a national list of 4-H state leaders responded to a questionnaire on leaders’ knowledge of lesbians and gays, homophobic attitudes, and practices regarding lesbian and gay youth. The majority of respondents were middle-aged, highly educated, white professionals who had substantial longevity in their positions. The largest group (40.4%) grew up on farms. Leaders’ scores on a gay and lesbian knowledge test, adapted from Sears, showed substantial variability (17 possible; \( \mu = 10.34; \text{SD}=3.9 \)). Low correct scores on specific questions indicated a lack of knowledge that could lead to practices which would undermine sexual minority youth development. Leaders’ scores on the Morrison & Morrison Modern Homonegativity Scale were normally distributed (range=12-60; \( \mu = 30.83; \text{SD}=8.37 \)), with 55% of state leaders scoring below the mean (less homophobic). Leaders’ scores on a researcher-designed best practices for working with lesbian and gay youth checklist were normally distributed (8 possible; \( \mu = 3.79; \text{SD}=2.03 \)). Leaders almost unanimously (90%) reported that anti-discrimination polices that protect lesbians and gays were highly visible in their organizations, and almost all
leaders (81%) recognized that youth who identified as lesbian or gay were harassed in school settings.

There was a large association ($\Phi = .493$) between leaders’ upbringing and homophobia, with rural leaders scoring high (more homophobic) on the homonegativity scale. There was a large association ($\Phi = .543$) between political affiliation and homophobia, with politically conservative leaders scoring high (more homophobic) on the homonegativity scale. There was a large association ($\Phi = .476$) between political affiliation and best practice implementation, with politically conservative leaders scoring low on a best practice implementation checklist. Political affiliation was the only demographic variable associated with all three measures surveyed: knowledge, attitudes, and best practice implementation. Politically conservative leaders were associated with low knowledge, high homophobia, and low best practice implementation. Also, leaders’ knowledge scores and homophobia scores had a large, negative correlation ($\rho = -.498$).

Contrary to the literature on homophobia, for 4-H state leaders’ gender, age, and religiosity were not associated with homophobia. Most leaders (64%) knew someone in their organization who was gay. All leaders recognized they either did have or could have lesbian or gay youth in their 4-H programs. Very few lesbian and gay 4-H professionals and volunteers publicly acknowledged their sexual orientation (are ‘out’) to
youth. (8.5% marked they had professionals who were out to youth; 6.4% marked they had volunteers who were out to youth).

To improve support for lesbian and gay youth, state leaders and Extension directors should encourage lesbian and gay professionals and volunteers to share their sexual orientation with colleagues and youth. The increased implementation of best practices to support lesbian and gay youth is also warranted. The high correlation between knowledge and attitudes suggests increased 4-H staff development would be beneficial. False beliefs about lesbians and gays that are associated with conservative political affiliation need to be challenged with scientific information through staff development and training.
Dedicated to L. Scott Marsh
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I also want to acknowledge the exceptional resources of The Ohio State University that allowed me to study under esteemed professors both within my department and outside it, especially the School of Education and Dr. Lather, Dr. Dameron, and Dr. Stein.
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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT ........................................................................................................................ ii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS ...................................................................................................... vi
VITA ..................................................................................................................................... vii
LIST OF TABLES .................................................................................................................. xvi
LIST OF FIGURES ............................................................................................................... xvii

## CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION ......................................................................................... 1
Diversity and Cooperative Extension .................................................................................. 1
  Background ........................................................................................................................ 1
Respecting to Diversity ........................................................................................................ 2
A New Audience ................................................................................................................. 2
Pathway to Diversity .......................................................................................................... 3
Pathways to Diversity Reaffirmed .................................................................................... 4
Change Agent States for Diversity .................................................................................... 5
4-H and Sexual Orientation ............................................................................................... 6
  LGBT Youth Harassed in School ..................................................................................... 7
  Keeping LGBT Youth Safe ............................................................................................... 8
Problem Statement ............................................................................................................ 8
Significance of the Study .................................................................................................... 9
Research Questions ........................................................................................................... 11
Definition of Terms ........................................................................................................... 12
Assumptions ....................................................................................................................... 14
Limitations ........................................................................................................................ 15

## CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW ........................................................................... 16
Introduction ......................................................................................................................... 16
Instrumentation ........................................................................................................... 53
Best Practices for LGBT Youth Development ...................................................... 53
Knowledge Scale ...................................................................................................... 54
Attitude Scale ........................................................................................................... 54
Demographic Information ...................................................................................... 55
Correlates of Homophobia .................................................................................. 56
Data Collection ........................................................................................................ 57
Response Rate .......................................................................................................... 59
History Validity ......................................................................................................... 59
Confidentiality ........................................................................................................... 60
Missing Data ............................................................................................................. 60
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS .......................................................................................... 61
Research Questions .................................................................................................. 61
Research Question #1 ............................................................................................. 61
Research Question #2 ............................................................................................. 63
Research Question #3 ............................................................................................. 66
Research Question #4 ............................................................................................. 69
Research Question #5 ............................................................................................. 71
Recoding .................................................................................................................. 71
   Group frequency distributions. ........................................................................... 71
   Demographic recoding ....................................................................................... 72
Knowledge, Homonegativity, and Best Practice Associations ......................... 78
   Knowledge X Demographics ............................................................................ 78
   Homonegativity X Demographics ................................................................ 81
   Best Practice X Demographics ..................................................................... 82
Research Question #6 ............................................................................................. 83
   Best Practice X Knowledge X Homonegativity ........................................... 84
Recommendations .................................................................................................................. 105
Implications for further study ............................................................................................... 105
Question 4 ............................................................................................................................. 106
  Major conclusions ................................................................................................................. 106
  Recommendations ................................................................................................................. 106
  Implications to knowledge/theory ......................................................................................... 109
  Implications for further study ............................................................................................... 109
Question 5 ............................................................................................................................. 110
  Major conclusions ................................................................................................................. 110
    Demographics X Knowledge .............................................................................................. 110
    Demographics X Homophobia (homonegativity) ............................................................... 110
    Demographics X Best Practice ........................................................................................... 111
  Implications to knowledge/theory ......................................................................................... 112
  Implications for further study ............................................................................................... 113
Question 6 ............................................................................................................................. 113
  Major conclusions ................................................................................................................. 113
  Recommendations ................................................................................................................. 114
  Implications for further study ............................................................................................... 115
Question 7 ............................................................................................................................. 116
  Major conclusions ................................................................................................................. 116
  Recommendations ................................................................................................................. 116
  Implications to knowledge/theory ......................................................................................... 117
Question 8 ............................................................................................................................. 117
  Major conclusions ................................................................................................................. 117
  Implications to knowledge/theory ......................................................................................... 118
  Implications for further study ............................................................................................... 118
LIST OF TABLES

Table 1. Upbringing Variables................................................................. 62

Table 2. Knowledge, Homonegativity, and Best Practice Grouped Frequency Distributions.................................................................................. 72

Table 3. Homonegativity X Upbringing Contingency Table......................... 74

Table 4. Original and Recoded Demographic Labels...................................... 76

Table 5. Associations between Demographics and Knowledge, Homonegativity, and Best Practice (Cramer’s V).............................................................. 79

Table 6. Knowledge X Homonegativity X Best Practice Correlations (ρ)........... 84

Table 7. High Knowledge/Low Homonegative Associations (Cramer’s V)........... 86

Table 8. Homonegativity Scores X Correlates of Homophobia (Cramer’s V)....... 88

Table 9. Knowledge, Homonegativity, and Best Practice X Prevalence and Openness (Cramer’s V).................................................................................. 93
LIST OF FIGURES

Figure 1. Factors Influencing 4-H State Leader LGBT Competency .......................... 50

Figure 2. 4-H Leader Knowledge Score Distribution .................................................. 64

Figure 3. 4-H Leader Attitude Score Distribution ....................................................... 68

Figure 4. 4-H Leader Best Practices Score Distribution .............................................. 70
CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION

Diversity and Cooperative Extension

Background

Cooperative Extension is the outreach unit of the fifty states and US Territories’ land-grant universities. Researchers, subject area specialists, and faculty and administrators supported by Cooperative Extension share newly developed knowledge with citizens. The goal of Cooperative Extension is to make scientific knowledge practical and useful. Cooperative Extension gets its support from U.S. Department of Agriculture, land-grant universities, and state and local governments. It has a far reach, with offices in more than 3,000 counties. Cooperative Extension’s interests vary from state to state, but all state are invested in four program areas: agriculture, family and consumer science, community development, and a youth development project called 4-H (Association of Public Land-Grant Colleges and Universities (APLU) - About Cooperative Extension, n.d.; U.S. Department of Agriculture, n.d.).
Responding to Diversity

A persistent theme in Cooperative Extension and in land-grant colleges and universities is their need to be responsive to the ever changing interests, issues, and values of an increasingly diverse audience (Broadwater & Travis, 2003; APLU - The Extension System: A Vision, 2002; Schaub & Castania, 2001; Ewert & Rice, 1994; Fowler & Johnsrud, 1991). From 1996 to 2000 the Kellogg Foundation produced six reports that called for significant change to make land-grant colleges and universities responsive to “a new age and a different world” (APLU - Kellogg Commission, 2001).

A New Audience

Extension’s focus in the twentieth century on the improvement of agricultural practices and rural life has been expanded in the twenty-first to include improving the lives of urban and suburban dwellers (Broadwater & Travis, 2003; APLU - The Extension System: A Vision, 2002; Patton, 1988). In the twenty-first century, Cooperative Extension’s educational and research activities are no longer necessarily tied to small farms, no longer necessarily agricultural in nature, and no longer primarily focused on improving agrarian life (Broadwater & Travis, 2003; APLU - The Extension System: A Vision, 2002; Patton, 1988). In its effort to remain relevant in changing times, Cooperative Extension leadership has long recognized as important the topic of

Pathway to Diversity

Cooperative Extension has a leadership committee titled the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (ECOP). In 1991, Richard Fowler, then Chair of ECOP, and Myron Johnsrud, Administrator with the Extension Service, USDA, authored an important policy document on diversity that outlined a strategy for making the Extension System a pluralistic organization. Called Pathway to Diversity – Strategic Plan for the Cooperative Extension System’s Emphasis on Diversity, the report recognized as “urgent” and “most important” the need to create an Extension System that was diverse and multicultural (Fowler & Johnsrud, 1991). It stated that, “Diversity–human difference in all forms–is no longer an option for organizations in the United States and its territories. Work force and audience diversity and pluralism are key to organizational survival and success in the 21st century” (Fowler & Johnsrud, p. 4).

The goal of the strategic plan was to, “. . . achieve and sustain pluralism as an integral part of every aspect of Extension: mission and vision; work force; programs; audiences; and relationships with other people, groups and organizations” (Fowler & Johnsrud, p. 9). Through what the authors called a “bold initiative,” they hoped the
Cooperative Extension System would become “a model for public and private agencies in valuing and promoting diversity and pluralism” (Fowler & Johnsrud, p. 17). The authors defined diversity as, “. . . differences among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, spiritual practices, and other human differences” (Fowler & Johnsrud, p. 6).

Pathways to Diversity Reaffirmed

Roughly ten years later, the document *Pathways to Diversity Reaffirmed*, provided a status report and recommended revisions to the strategic goals the Extension System committed to in the original *Pathway to Diversity* report (Broadwater & Travis, 2003). In the *Pathways to Diversity Reaffirmed* report, the Extension System sought to remain competitive and relevant by becoming a pluralistic organization that improved the lives of diverse Americans through relevant educational programs (Broadwater & Travis).

Importantly, for this investigation, the second report found that no monitoring system had been established to determine whether or not Extension had progressed on its original second goal: “Identify and implement ways to create a physical, psychological, and emotional environment that fosters diversity and pluralism in the workplace and in programs” (Broadwater & Travis, 2003, p. 6). While the investigating team could document a number of diversity workshops that had been offered for Extension
professionals over the intervening decade, no outcome data existed to determine whether they had been effective (Broadwater & Travis). Additionally, no outcome data existed to determine whether or not Extension programs fostered diversity and pluralism (Broadwater & Travis).

Together these two reports on the Extension System’s strategic effort to become a pluralistic organization reveal two important concerns: Extension System documents clearly express leadership’s commitment to creating a pluralistic organization; and the Extension System has not made significant strides in measuring its success in realizing work force and audience diversity (Broadwater & Travis).

Change Agent States for Diversity

In 2003, in an effort to move the organization forward, Extension Committee on Policy (ECOP) charged a select group of state organizations, called the Change Agent States for Diversity Project, to develop strategies and models for becoming a pluralistic organization (Ingram, 2005). Ingram (2005) interviewed Extension leaders in seven states at the beginning of their projects and defined the following challenges: citizens that sat on advisory panels often were not interested in diversity issues; sexual orientation was difficult to talk about in some state organizations; leaders received the least amount of training on diversity compared to other topics; and leaders felt able to lead their organization on diversity measures only “to some degree.” Her investigation into the
change agent state organizations revealed that Extension faces significant challenges in their efforts to become a pluralistic organization. A longitudinal study in Ohio Extension supplies further evidence that Extension will not find it easy to create a diverse organization. Researchers in Ohio discovered that, despite “enormous effort” over a ten year period, Ohio was unable to significantly increase its staff’s valuing of diversity (Safrit, Conklin, & Jones, 1995; Safrit, Conklin, & Jones, 2003).

4-H and Sexual Orientation

Although there is little discussion of sexual orientation in the Extension literature, addressing the needs of Extension’s sexual minority work force and sexual minority audiences appears to be an especially difficult challenge (Ingram, 2005; Lechman, 2005). In a recent paper published on the National Extension Diversity Council’s website, Lechman stated that Extension has left sexual orientation out of its commitment to diversity. She argued that homophobia and heterosexism are prejudices that potentially limit the functioning of all citizens and need to be addressed before Extension can succeed in becoming a pluralistic organization (Lechman).
One of Extension’s most popular programs is a youth development program called 4-H (Astroth, 2003). It serves between six and seven million youth and is the largest non formal youth development organization in the world (National 4-H Headquarters, n.d.). 4-H’s leadership is comprised of youth development specialists who share with their communities the knowledge gained through research at the land-grant universities. Despite 4-H’s size and importance, little is known about its diversity efforts or its work in addressing sexual minority youth.

**LGBT Youth Harassed in School**

Researchers on school campus climates have shown that without proactive measures designed to keep sexual minority kids safe, lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered (LGBT) youth will experience extreme prejudice in school settings (Kosciw, Diaz & Greytak, 2008; Russell, McGuire et als., 2006; National Education, 2006; Markow & Fein; California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004; Safe Schools Coalition, 1999). In educational environments where prejudice is not addressed, there is widespread and persistent harassment of sexual minority youth (Kosciw, Diaz & Greytak, 2008; Russell, McGuire et als., 2006; National Education, 2006; Markow & Fein; California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004; Safe Schools Coalition, 1999). The harassment of sexual minority youth in schools has significant negative consequences for them. Sexual minority youth are much more likely than their straight peers to carry a weapon to school,
seriously consider suicide, miss school because they feel unsafe, report being depressed, and use methamphetamines and inhalants (Garofolo et al., 1998; Ryan, 2003; Russell, McGuire et al., 2006).

**Keeping LGBT Youth Safe**

Organizations that serve gay and lesbian youth unanimously recommend support services for sexual minority youth in educational settings such as schools; they argue that silence on the issue of sexual orientation maintains the status quo, which is unsafe for sexual minority youth (National School Board, 2009; Kosciw, Diaz & Greytak, 2008; National Education Association, 2006; Tides Center, 2006; California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004; Safe Schools Coalition, 2006; Advocates for Youth, 2002). Only when the prejudices of the dominant culture are visibly challenged, and norms of respect are asserted, they argue, are sexual minority youth safe (National School Board, 2009; Kosciw, Diaz & Greytak, 2008; National Education Association, 2006; Tides Center, 2006; California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004; Safe Schools Coalition, 2006; Advocates for Youth, 2002).

**Problem Statement**
National leaders of the Extension System write stridently about the need for Extension’s leadership to move the organization forward toward pluralism and embrace practices that are inclusive and non discriminatory. The Extension System operates under broad and inclusive non discriminatory policies--including protection based on sexual orientation--that are required by the Federal USDA, land-grant institutions, and state 4-H organizations. The Pathways to Diversity Reaffirmed document asserts the importance of assessment as a means for moving the organization forward (Broadwater & Travis, 2003). The study will be the first to assess state 4-H leaders’ gay and lesbian knowledge, homophobic attitudes, and best practice interventions to support sexual minority youth (K. Lechman, personal communication, March 2006; S. T. Russell, personal communication, April 2006). It will also contribute to the larger assessment of Extension’s progress toward meeting its pluralistic goals.

Significance of the Study

According to the Pathways to Diversity Reaffirmed document, it is critical to Extension’s mission to find ways to assess its progress toward becoming a pluralistic organization (Broadwater & Travis, 2003). Perhaps in no Extension program is this more
important than 4-H where the cost of not meeting the organization’s pluralistic goal--and
creating a climate of acceptance for sexual minority youth--is significant not only for the
organization, but also for the audience. Recent research has shown negative outcomes
for sexual minority youth in educational environments that do not actively address
prejudice (National School Board, 2009; Kosciw, Diaz & Greytak, 2008; National
Education Association, 2006; Tides Center, 2006; California Safe Schools Coalition,
2004; Safe Schools Coalition, 2006; Advocates for Youth, 2002).

An organization that supports lesbian and gay youth is characterized by visible
policy, knowledgeable leaders, an environment in which prejudices are continually
challenged, and the implementation of best practices that are designed to overcome the
prejudices of the predominant society (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network
(GLSEN), 2009; American Civil Liberties Union, 2002). Broad non discrimination
policies--including protections for sexual orientation--govern 4-H professionals and 4-H
programs. Little is known, though, about 4-H leaders’ readiness to support lesbian and
gay youth. This study is designed to assess state 4-H leaders’ knowledge, attitudes, and
behaviors toward sexual minorities. The study contributes to the measurement of 4-H’s
progress in meeting its goal to become a pluralistic organization that can meet the needs
of diverse audiences.
The study also identifies best practices for creating safe environments for sexual minority youth. These practices are recommended by national organizations that serve lesbian and gay youth, and may have practical value for educational organizations wishing to improve the safety of their organizations. Other non formal educational organizations may find the review of best practices to ensure the safety of sexual minority youth helpful.

Research Questions

The researcher selected the following questions for this study:

1. What are the characteristics of 4-H state leaders?
2. How do 4-H state leaders score on a test measuring knowledge about sexual minorities compared to similar educational professionals?
3. How do state leaders score on a scale measuring modern homonegativity toward lesbians and gays compared to similar educational professionals?
4. To what extent do state 4-H organizations implement best practices for a sexual minority audience?
5. Do state leader demographics predict high or low scores?
6. Is the extent of best practice implementation correlated with 4-H state leader sexual minority knowledge score, homonegativity score, demographic information, or state policy?

7. What are the correlates of high knowledge/low phobia for 4-H leaders?

8. Do correlates of homophobia cited in the literature hold true for 4-H state leaders?

9. Are lesbians and gays visible in state 4-H organizations, can lesbians and gays be open regarding their orientation, and does their visibility and openness correlate with 4-H leaders’ knowledge, homonegativity, and best practice implementation?

Definition of Terms

The researcher used the following terms in this study:

4-H State Leaders: individuals who identified themselves as state 4-H program leaders on a report to the National 4-H Headquarters dated 9/02/08.

Heterosexuals: the majority of individual--roughly 90%--who are sexually attracted to some members of the opposite sex.

LGBT youth: a minority of youth--10% or less--who identify as lesbian, gay, bisexual, or transgendered.
**Bisexual:** “Relating to or having a sexual orientation to persons of either sex” (Bisexual, n.d.).

**Transgender:** “Of, relating to, or being a person (as a transsexual or transvestite) who identifies with or expresses a gender identity that differs from the one which corresponds to the person's sex at birth” (Transgender, n.d.).

**Homonegativity:** Hudson and Ricketts proposed this term to describe any negative attitude towards homosexuality (be it emotional, moral, or intellectual disapproval), regardless of the sources of this attitude (be it based on religious, moral, ideological, or other beliefs). The term homonegativity attempts to be neutral and non-pejorative (1980).

**Homophobia:** “Irrational fear of, aversion to, or discrimination against homosexuality or homosexuals” (Homophobia, n.d.).

**Gays:** “Relating to a homosexual or the lifestyle thereof. A homosexual, especially male” (Gay, n.d.).

**Lesbians:** “A gay or homosexual woman. Of, relating to, or being a lesbian” (Lesbian, n.d.).

**Best practice:** practices for creating an accepting environment for sexual minority youth that are recommended by leading, national organizations that serve sexual
minorities; the best practices identified in this research have not been demonstrated by independent researchers to make a difference in the lives of LGBT youth.

*Diversity:* “differences among people with respect to age, class, ethnicity, gender, physical and mental ability, race, sexual orientation, spiritual practices and other human differences” (Fowler & Johnsrud, 1991).

*Pluralism:* “organizational culture that incorporates mutual respect, acceptance, teamwork and productivity among people who are diverse in the dimensions of human differences listed above as diversity” (Fowler & Johnsrud, 1991).

**Assumptions**

For the purpose of the study, it was assumed that:

1. 4-H leaders’ play a significant role in making their organizations safe for lesbian and gay youth.
2. 4-H state leaders have much in common with other youth educators, and it is meaningful to use knowledge and attitude tests that have been validated with other education professionals.
3. 4-H state leaders will consider the topic of the questionnaire to be relevant to their state organization’s mission and will answer it truthfully.
4. LGBT youth experience harassment in both out-of-school, non formal settings as well as school settings.

5. Proactive measures to address LGBT safety are important to both out-of-school, non formal settings and school settings.

Limitations

Recognized limitations of this study included:

1. This study is limited to the perceptions of 4-H state leaders and may not capture 4-H leaders’ actual readiness to support of lesbian and gay youth.

2. This study does not attempt to capture professionals, educators, volunteers, 4-H youths, or 4-H alumni’s perception of 4-H leaders’ readiness to support lesbian and gay youth.

3. Some state 4-H leaders may not have much influence on the readiness of their organization to support lesbian and gay youth.
CHAPTER 2: LITERATURE REVIEW

Introduction

Chapter two brings together two distinct literatures: a set of documents and articles that describe Extension’s intent to become a diversity leader, and population based studies that describe the harassment of LGBT youth in school settings and the interventions that are necessary to make them safe and welcome. The chapter begins by looking at documents from the early 1990’s that show Cooperative Extension has been strident in its intent to become a diversity leader, make the organization pluralistic, and demonstrate competence in engaging a diverse American public. An examination of leadership statements and policy documents shows that it has included sexual minorities among its desired workforce and intended audiences. An overview of the non discrimination policies that govern the USDA, Cooperative Extension, and the land-grant universities confirm that sexual orientation is a protected class for these organizations in employment and programming.

A separate literature from population-based youth studies provides evidence that LGBT youth experience persistent harassment from a sometimes prejudiced and
homophobic public. We learn that the only way to keep LGBT youth safe and make them feel welcome is by being pro-active and intentionally creating environments that are free from prejudice and harassment. LGBT youth serving organizations provide a number of emerging, promising practices that help reduce or eliminate harassment.

4-H leaderships’ readiness to support lesbian and gay youth is informed by these two literatures. 4-H is one of Extension’s most visible and popular programs, impacting the healthy development of between roughly six and seven million participants across America, including youth who are LGBT.

As we shall see, 4-H research on diversity is in its infancy, and the researcher found just two documents that directly addressed working with LGBT youth in 4-H. There are a number of documents regarding creating safe places for LGBT youth, however, in resources marketed to Extension’s youth development professionals. Sexual diversity competence is now a visible topic in the 4-H literature.

The chapter concludes by examining leadership as a key element in understanding organizational competence, and the researcher recommends an analysis of 4-H state leaders’ knowledge, attitudes, and best practice implementation as an initial step toward evaluating 4-H’s support of gay and lesbian youth.
Extension and Pluralism

With less than two percent of the American population supported by family farming at the end of the 20\textsuperscript{th} century, the traditional mission of The Cooperative Extension System and Land-grant Universities--to help rural populations improve agricultural methods--needed to be revisited (Broadwater & Travis, 2003; Fowler & Johnsrud, 1991; Patton, 1988).

**Kellogg Commission Reports**

In response to a request from the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges (now called the Association of Public and Land-Grant Universities) to evaluate the mission of Extension, the Kellogg Foundation produced six reports between 1996 and 2000 that made recommendations regarding the student experience, student access, the institution’s engagement with its constituency, supporting a learning society, and campus culture (APLU - Kellogg Commission, 2001). The 6\textsuperscript{th} report, in particular, challenged land-grant universities to revitalize their missions through a recommitment to engage with communities (APLU - Kellogg Commission, 2001). The Kellogg reports encouraged Land-grant Universities and the Cooperative Extension System to maintain its relevancy, in part, by becoming a pluralistic organization that mirrors the increasingly diverse ethnicity, family structure, and values of the American public, and by providing programming relevant to an increasingly diverse America (APLU - Kellogg Commission, 2001).
Even before the Kellogg reports, the Cooperative Extension System had recognized the importance of becoming a more pluralistic organization in order to remain relevant to an increasingly diverse America. In 1991, the leadership body of Cooperative Extension, the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, published a policy paper which strongly recommended that the Extension organization embrace pluralism if it hoped to remain vital to the American public (Fowler & Johnsrud).

Pathway to Diversity

In “Pathway to Diversity – Strategic Plan for the Cooperative Extension System’s “Emphasis on Diversity,” Richard Fowler, Chair of the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy, and Myron Johnsrud, Administrator with the Extension Service, USDA, outlined a strategy for making the Extension System pluralistic (1991). A new goal of the strategic plan was to, “. . . achieve and sustain pluralism as an integral part of every aspect of Extension: mission and vision; work force; programs; audiences; and relationships with other people, groups and organizations” (Fowler & Johnsrud, p. 9). They called for the Cooperative Extension System to become “a model for public and private agencies in valuing and promoting diversity and pluralism” (Fowler & Johnsrud, p. 17).

Pathways to Diversity Reaffirmed

In 2003, the document “Pathways to Diversity Reaffirmed,” provided a status report and recommended revisions to the strategic goals the Extension System had
committed to in the original “Pathways to Diversity” report (Broadwater & Travis, 2003). In the “Reaffirmed” report, again, the Extension System sought to remain competitive and relevant by becoming a pluralistic organization that improved the lives of diverse Americans through relevant educational programs. Two important recommendations were made in the report: more monetary resources needed to be allocated to make the Extension System pluralistic; and the original six strategic goals needed to be aggregated into three---commitment to becoming a pluralistic organization, hiring diverse staff, and engaging in full and diverse partnerships (Broadwater & Travis).

Importantly, in the second report the authors recognized no monitoring system had been established to determine whether or not Extension had progressed on the second original goal, “Identify and implement ways to create a physical, psychological, and emotional environment that fosters diversity and pluralism in the workplace and in programs” (Broadwater and Travis, p. 7). While the investigating team could document a number of diversity workshops that had been offered over the intervening decade, no outcome data existed to determine whether or not they had been effective (Broadwater & Travis).

Together these two reports on the Extension System’s strategic effort to become a pluralistic organization reveal two important issues: Extension System documents are unequivocal in their commitment to a pluralistic ideal; and the Extension System has not made significant strides toward documenting its success in the implementation of the ideal (Broadwater & Travis).
In an effort to move Cooperative Extension and land-grant universities forward, in 1999 National Extension charged a select group of state organizations, called the Change Agent States for Diversity Project, to develop models and strategies for becoming pluralistic organizations (Ingram, 2005). The project was guided by two goals: “. . . to build the capacity of land-grant universities to function inclusively and effectively in a multicultural world; and to set standards and implement a vision for supporting healthy, thriving, culturally diverse communities through Extension, research and academic programs” (Ingram, 2005, p. 1). The project incorporated four different strategies: leadership development, advisory committee or “catalyst team” development, Diversity Coordinator development, and an assessment of organizational climate (Ingram, 2006).

Ingram (2005) interviewed Extension leaders in seven states at the beginning of their projects and found the following: citizens that sat on advisory panels often were not interested in diversity issues; sexual orientation was difficult to talk about in some state organizations; leaders received the least amount of training on diversity compared to other topics; and leaders felt able to lead their organization on diversity measures only “to some degree.” Importantly for this investigation, Ingram asked about state leaders’ diversity training and state leaders’ power to lead as two important indicators of a state organization’s ability to move forward on diversity.

Ingram also interviewed state coordinators from advisory committees or catalyst teams representing the seven Change Agent States to determine what level of success
teams were having in addressing diversity (2006). She investigated five issues: membership in the catalyst team, whether or not teams were supported with financial resources, the teams’ success in making and implementing recommendations, the teams’ impact on university Extension, and the benefits of working collaboratively with other change states (Ingram). Findings relevant to this study included the discovery that some teams included representatives from LGBT commissions, some teams added sexual orientation to their Equal Employment Opportunity policy statements, and some teams reported greater awareness of sexual orientation issues (Ingram).

In 2004, an additional 7 states, called the Change Agent States for Engagement, joined the Change Agent States project (Ingram, 2006). It was hoped that the original seven states would mentor the new ‘engagement’ states.

Diversity documents reveal an early commitment to diversity, the inclusion of sexual orientation at the outset of the diversity discussion, and the piloting of procedures in land-grant universities that were designed to bring about organizational change.

Protection for Sexual Orientation

The original call for pluralism in the Cooperative Extension System’s 1991 Pathways document included sexual orientation in its vision, but another seven years passed before lesbians and gays were protected in Extension under federal policy.

President Clinton signed two Executive Orders that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation that directly impacted the policies of the USDA and Extension. The first, signed in May 1998, protected federal employees against employment

Both the National 4-H Headquarters, which provides leadership to state 4-H organizations, and the National Institute of Food and Agriculture (NIFA; formerly the Cooperative State Research Education and Extension System; CSREES), which provides land-grant universities funds and program leadership for 4-H and other programs, are agencies of the USDA and their employees and programs are covered by Clinton’s federal non discrimination policy (J. Kahler, CSREES, personal communication, November 16, 2005).

*Director’s Memorandum*

A memorandum to the Cooperative State Research, Education, and Extension Service employees, written by Director Colien Hefferan, captures the emphasis CSREES puts on non discrimination:

> It is of the utmost importance that we renew and strengthen our efforts to ensure equal access and opportunity in all aspects of our programs and employment practices without regard to race, color national origin, religion, sex, disability, or sexual orientation to the full extent of nondiscrimination laws. As employees of the Agency, we are charged by law and regulation to conduct our business in such
a manner that CSREES does not directly or by implication condone the practice of discrimination. We have an obligation to correct any program or management practice that is not achieving the objectives of inclusion and anti-discrimination. We are expected to play a very important role in maintaining a positive equal opportunity environment, that ensures discrimination and harassment do not exist in our education and research programs, employment activities, or our work environment (Hefferan, n. d.).

Conducted Versus Assisted Programs

Protections guaranteed to federal workers and programs at the USDA, CSREES and the National 4-H Headquarters do not extend directly to state 4-H programs, however, even though 4-H receives funds through the USDA and is guided by CSREES and the National 4-H Headquarters. According to William Scaggs at the USDA, the USDA made a distinction between ‘conducted’ programs and ‘assisted’ programs when it wrote its non discrimination policy (W. Scaggs, USDA, personal communication, August 24, 2007). Conducted programs are those that the USDA, itself, runs. USDA conducted programs, such as the Direct Farm Loan Program and the Natural Resource Conservation Program, which directly assist members of the public. The USDA policy protecting employees and program participants from discrimination based on sexual orientation covers these conducted programs (W. Scaggs, USDA, personal communication, August 24, 2007).
Assisted programs, on the other hand, are programs that are funded by the USDA, but are administered by an intermediary organization. Programs for the public that originate at land-grant colleges and universities are examples of assisted programs, since they receive USDA dollars but are not conducted by the USDA. USDA policies do not cover assisted programs, and protection from discrimination based on sexual orientation in assisted programs is not guaranteed by the Clinton Executive Orders.

Because Cooperative Extension and 4-H operate under state land-grant universities, the USDA considers them to be assisted programs and not covered by USDA non-discrimination policies. “4-H programs within the state operate under the guidelines and policies of their respective state land-grant universities under which they operate in the Cooperative Extension System” (J. Kahler, CSREES, personal communication, November 16, 2005).

4-H Cannot Discriminate

While Cooperative Extension and 4-H may not be governed by USDA non-discrimination policies, CSREES holds that 4-H cannot discriminate based on sexual orientation and investigates sexual orientation discrimination complaints levied against 4-H (C. de Ville, CSREES, personal communication, August 24, 2007). According to Curt de Ville of CSREES, virtually all land-grant colleges and universities have non-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation (personal communication, August 24, 2007). Policies govern employment, but also access to programs. Thus 4-H, through its operation within land-grant universities, cannot discriminate based on sexual
orientation. According to de Ville, CSREES also considers sexual orientation to be protected by the original Smith-Lever Act that prohibits restricting access to the benefits of federal programs, unless an individual’s behavior will have an adverse impact on a program (personal communication August 24, 2007). While there is no federal law that protects all employees and participants in 4-H from discrimination based on sexual orientation, in practice LGBT adults and youth receive the protections granted them through their respective land-grant universities.

*National 4-H Foundation and National 4-H Center Provide Protection*

The National 4-H Foundation and National 4-H Center are both private organizations that, while having no governing authority over state organizations, are seen as partner institutions. Both have inclusive, non-discriminatory policies that include the protection of sexual orientation (National 4-H Foundation, n.d.; National 4-H Center, n.d.).

*Policy and Leadership Support Diversity Competency*

The Kellogg reports, the Pathways documents authored by Cooperative Extension leadership, and the Change Agent States projects provide evidence of Cooperative Extension leaders’ commitment to diversity. Additionally, numerous federal, state, and private organizations that have partial authority over Extension and 4-H have non-discrimination policies that include sexual orientation. Both national leadership and pervasive and consistent non-discrimination policies support Extension and 4-H’s protection of lesbians and gays from discrimination.
LGBT Youth

*Harassment Studies*

A growing body of population-based studies provide evidence that LGBT youth experience significant harassment, intimidation and bullying in school settings, and that educators need to be proactive in addressing these issues if all students are to feel welcome and safe (Kosciw, Diaz & Greytak, 2008; Russell, McGuire et al., 2006; National Education, 2006; Markow & Fein; California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004; Safe Schools Coalition, 1999).

*Safe Schools Coalition Study*

In an early study, “Eighty-three Thousand Youths – Selected Findings of Eight Population-Based Studies (as they pertain to anti-gay harassment and the safety and well-being of sexual minority students),” researchers analyzed the federal Youth Risk Behavior Survey in Massachusetts, Seattle, Vermont, and Wisconsin; the Adolescent Health Survey conducted by the University of Minnesota; the Voice of Connecticut Youth survey; and the National American Indian Adolescent Health Survey to determine how well LGBT youth were doing (Safe Schools Coalition of Washington, 1999). The studies took place from 1987 to 1997 and included responses from junior and senior high school students (Safe Schools Coalition of Washington). The researchers concluded that sexual minority youth, and youth perceived to be lesbian or gay, were more likely to be harassed, were at greater risk for being threatened or assaulted, were more likely to have
been harmed at home, were more likely to skip school out of concerns for safety, and were more likely than peers to engage in risk behavior---including abusing alcohol and other drugs, becoming pregnant, vomiting to lose weight, and thinking about and attempting suicide (Safe Schools Coalition of Washington).

California Study

In an analysis of a survey of 237,544 7th, 9th and 11th graders in California schools in 2001-2002, researchers found that 7.5% or 200,000 California students reported being harassed based on actual or perceived sexual orientation (Russell, McGuire, Laub, Manke, O’Shaughnessey, et al. 2006). Additionally, harassed students reported weaker connections to school and teachers, were more likely to be victimized and carry weapons to school, were more likely to miss school, and were more likely to have low grades than their un-harassed peers (Russell, McGuire, Laub, Manke, O’Shaughnessey, et al.). Harassed students were also twice as likely to experience depression, three times as likely to consider suicide, and almost four times as likely to make a suicide plan (Russell, McGuire, Laub, Manke, O’Shaughnessey, et al.). Harassed students were twice as likely to be smokers, were much more likely to binge drink, and were more likely to drink alcohol, smoke marijuana, use inhalants, use amphetamines, drive after drinking, or ride in a car with a drinking driver (Russell, McGuire, Laub, Manke, O’Shaughnessey, et al.).

National Education Association Study

The National Education Association of the United States 2006 school employee’s guide to working with sexual minority youth cites the following risk statistics for sexual
minority youth: 64% of LGBT report feeling unsafe at school because of their sexual orientation and 84% of LGBT students report being verbally harassed (National Education, 2006). LGBT students and students perceived to be LGBT were more than five times as likely to be injured or threatened with a weapon at school compared to their heterosexual peers and more than three times as likely to carry a weapon to school (National Education). Harassed LGBT students had grades that were more than 10% lower than their peers and were twice as likely to say they would not be going to college (National Education). Nearly 30% of LGBT student missed school in the past month because they felt unsafe (National Education).

California Healthy Kids Study

An analysis of the 2001-2002 California Healthy Kids Survey and 2003 Preventing School Harassment survey carried out by California Safe Schools Coalition and Gay-Straight Alliance Network revealed that 91% of students heard other students make negative comments related to sexual orientation, and 46% heard teachers and staff make negative comments related to sexual orientation (California Safe Schools Coalition and 4-H, 2004). Two out of three self-identified LGBT students reported being harassed based on sexual orientation (California Safe Schools Coalition and 4-H). Twenty-seven percent reported being harassed because they were not masculine or feminine enough, fifty-three percent said school was unsafe for “guys who aren’t as masculine as other guys,” and 34% said school was unsafe for “girls who aren’t as feminine as other girls” (California Safe Schools Coalition and 4-H).
Gay, Lesbian, and Straight Education Network (GLSEN)

Beginning in 1999, GLSEN has conducted surveys every two years to understand the experience of LGBT youth in schools. The 2005 survey reached 3,450 students aged 13-18 and 1,011 secondary school teachers (Markow & Fein, 2005). Thirty-three percent of teens reported they were frequently harassed because of perceived or actual sexual orientation (Markow & Fein). Fifty-two percent of teens reported they frequently heard students make homophobic remarks and 36% of teens said bullying or harassment was a serious problem at their school (Markow & Fein). An even greater number of teachers (53%) reported that bullying and harassment was a serious problem at their school (Markow & Fein).

In the 2005 study, students who were perceived to be LGBT were three times more likely (22% vs. 7%) than non-LGBT students to not feel safe at school (Markow & Fein). Ninety percent of perceived LGBT teens had been verbally or physically harassed during the past year because of their appearance, gender, perceived or actual sexual orientation, gender expression, race/ethnicity, disability, or religion (Markow & Fein).

Despite the high rates of harassment for LGBT students in schools, 73% of teachers strongly agreed that they have an obligation to ensure a safe and supportive learning environment for LGBT students (Markow & Fein). Additionally, 48% of secondary school students and 51% of teachers reported that their school had a harassment policy that specifically mentioned sexual orientation or gender identity/expression (Markow & Fein).
In their most recent 2007 study, *The National School Climate Survey – Key Findings on the Experiences of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Youth in our Nation’s Schools*, researchers surveyed 6,209 students between the ages of 13 and 21 who identified as lesbian, gay, or bisexual from all 50 states (Kosciw, Diaz, & Greytak, 2008). Among their findings, 73.6% of students heard homophobic remarks often or frequently at school. Students also reported varying degrees of harassment, from verbal threats to being punched, kicked, or injured with a weapon. Almost all (86.2%) reported they had been verbally harassed, 44.1% reported being physically harassed, and 22.1% reported being physically assaulted. Most students (60.8%) who had been harassed did not report it to school officials because they thought nothing would be done about it; of those who did report harassment, 31.1% said their school did nothing (Kosciw, Diaz, & Greytak, 2008).

The findings indicated that harassment led to a disengagement from school. LGBT students reported skipping class and skipping school because they felt unsafe at a much higher rate than high school students on a national survey. The LGBT students who had experienced the most harassment were much more likely not to have plans to attend college compared to their un-harassed peers. Degree of harassment was associated with missing school because of safety concerns (Kosciw, J. G., Diaz, E. M., & Greytak, E. A., 2008).
Summary of Harassment Studies

According to analyses of recent population-based studies, LGBT youth experience persistent harassment from fellow students and teachers and engage in at-risk behaviors at a much higher rate than the general school population. LGBT youth missing school because they felt unsafe was common, and the most harassed LGBT students had low educational aspirations.

It should be noted that when LGBT youth have supportive families, schools, and peers, their behavior outcomes are similar to those of heterosexual youth. The stigma attached to being gay puts youth at risk, not sexual identity itself (Horowitz, A. & Hansen, A. 2006; Benton, J. 2003).

Improving School Climate for LGBT Youth

Best Practices

While there is little available research that describes evidence-based best practices for creating safe spaces for LGBT students, a number of national, sexual minority youth serving organizations have begun to suggest promising practices for addressing the safety needs of sexual minority students in educational settings.

California Safe Schools Coalition

In “Research Brief Number 3,” authors from the LGBT youth serving agency, California Safe Schools Coalition, list steps schools can take to begin to create a safe
environment for LGBT youth (Russell, McGuire, Laub, & Manke, 2006). They suggest schools establish and publicize a harassment policy that includes sexual orientation, train teachers and staff to intervene when they hear slurs based on sexual orientation, support gay-straight alliance clubs, ensure students know where to go for sexual orientation support, introduce curriculum that includes LGBT figures, and have information available about sexual orientation (Russell, McGuire, Laub, & Manke).

The California Safe Schools Coalition also has a set of recommendations for school districts, including: passing non discrimination policies that include gender identity; providing teachers, students, and parents with verbal and written notification of the policies, including how to file a complaint; providing mandatory training for staff and students, including trainings for teachers on how to intervene when they hear slurs; including sexual orientation in curriculum; and incorporating community-based trainers, support staff, parents, and students as trainers (Tides Center, 2006).

*Gay and Lesbian Straight Education Network*

The national Gay and Lesbian Straight Education Network which focuses on LGBT youth in school settings, lists five broad measures districts and schools can implement to create safe school climates for LGBT youth. In a report on the 2007 National School Climate Survey findings, they recommend: including sexual orientation and gender expression in district non-discrimination policies; ensuring students have methods for reporting incidents, and school officials respond to the reports of harassment; supporting gay-straight alliance student clubs; providing staff with training and
increasing the number of supportive staff; and providing curriculum and library resources for students that have accurate information regarding LGBT people (Kosciw, Diaz, & Greytak, 2008).

The National Education Association

The National Education Association’s 2006, “School Employee Guide to GLBT Issues” reviews statistics compiled from the 2003 National School Climate Survey, the 1995 Seattle Teen Health Survey, the American Academy of Child and Adolescent Psychiatry (2005), the FBI (2003), the UC-Davis 4-H Center for Youth Development (2004), the U. S. Secret Service National Threat Assessment Center (2001), and GLSEN. Based on their research, students who learn about LGBT as part of their class work are more than 20% less likely to be bullied based on sexual orientation (The National Education Association). LGBT students who did not have or did not know they had a policy protecting them from harassment were almost 40% more likely to skip school than those who knew (The National Education).

UC-Davis 4-H Center

In a Senate hearing on school safety, past director of the UC-Davis 4-H Center for Youth Development, Stephen Russell, reported that sexual minority youth with positive feelings about their teachers were significantly less likely than peers to experience school troubles (Senate select committee, 2002). Gay-straight alliance clubs, teacher training, and school policy reduced school harassment and improved school safety (Senate select
committee, 2002). Gay-straight alliance clubs had the greatest effect in improving school diversity climate (Senate select committee, 2002).

*California Safe School Coalition*

In “Consequences of Harassment Based on Actual or Perceived Sexual Orientation and Gender Non-Conformity and Steps for Making Schools Safer,” a document authored by the California Safe Schools Coalition and the 4-H Center for Youth Development, a number of recommendations were made for making schools safe for LGBT youth (California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004). The authors recommend establishing an anti-harassment policy that includes sexual orientation and gender identity; making sure students know about their anti-harassment policy; requiring teachers and administrators to undergo training; teaching teachers to intervene when they hear slurs and negative comments; supporting a gay-straight alliance club; making sure students know where to go for information and support; and introducing curriculum that includes LGBT people and covers gender identity and sexual orientation (California Safe Schools Coalition).

*Advocates for Youth*

In their “Tips and Strategies for Creating Inclusive Programs,” the national LGBT youth organization, Advocates for Youth, recommends a number of strategies for creating a safe school for LGBT students (2002). They recommend:

- school employees assess their own values and prejudices
- there be zero tolerance for homophobic sentiments and actions
• schools post Safe Zone stickers on offices and classrooms where adults feel competent to address LGBT issues
• educators use inclusive language
• school employees undergo training sessions to debunk myths and stereotypes
• educators connect youth with peer leaders
• LGBT youth participate on panels
• schools begin or support gay-straight alliance clubs
• administrators hire adults who are LGBT and reflect the make-up of the community
• youth-adult partnerships be encouraged
• schools include LGBT groups in their referral lists
• staff be knowledgeable about referral agencies and refer students to them
• schools include comprehensive sex education that includes information about LGBT people (Advocates for Youth, 2002).

A recent document called, Making Schools Safe for Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, & Transgender Students and Staff, was produced by a project of Advocates for Youth called Youthresource (Advocates for Youth - Youthresource, n.d.). The document includes a comprehensive list of recommended actions:

• hold public hearings highlighting the need for LGBT support
• draft school policies that include sexual orientation and gender nonconformity
• draft school policies that provide domestic partner benefits
• offer training on violence and suicide prevention to school personnel
• support gay-straight alliance clubs
• provide counseling to LGBT youth and their families
• include accurate LGBT materials in the library and school paper
• include LGBT information across the curriculum
• support LGBT faculty who publicly acknowledge their sexual orientation
• include LGBT information in teacher certification programs
• learn to be an LGBT ally.

Best Practice Research

While a number of youth serving organizations have made recommendations regarding improving the safety of LGBT youth, little research exists that demonstrates which interventions make a difference, or which interventions matter most.

Szalacha Research

In one of the few research studies that measured the impact of LGBT safety interventions on school climate, a 2000 Massachusetts study evaluated the impact of their state department of education’s Safe Schools Program for Gay and Lesbian Students on the sexual diversity climate of 33 schools and 99 classrooms (Szalacha, 2003). The department had recommended that schools improve sexual diversity climate by implementing a gay-straight alliance club, conducting teacher training, and/or
establishing an inclusive school policy (Szalacha). The researcher discovered that any of the three interventions improved students’ self-report of school sexual diversity climate. The impact of a gay-straight alliance club on the sexual diversity climate of the school had the greatest positive effect, and, significantly, the effect was greater for males than females (Szalacha).

*Markow & Fein Research*

In another 2005 study that looked at the impact of policy on school climate, researchers reported that students whose schools have a policy that includes sexual orientation are less likely (33% vs. 44%) to report there being a serious harassment problem at school (Markow & Fein, 2005). Students from schools with inclusive policies were harassed less often (32% vs. 43%) in school because of perceived or actual sexual orientation, were more likely (54% vs. 36%) to feel very safe, and were less likely (5% vs. 16%) to skip a class because they felt unsafe (Markow & Fein).

*Goodenow, Szalacha, and Westheimer Research*

A recent study looking at the impact of support groups for LGBT students found that sexual minority adolescents in schools with gay-straight support groups reported lower rates of victimization and suicide attempts. (Goodenow, Szalacha and Westheimer, 2006).

*Best Practices Summary*

Summarizing the publications above, without intervention, LGBT youth and youth perceived to be LGBT, are vulnerable to harassment by peers and adults in
educational settings. To prevent harassment, educational organizations must be proactive in their policies and procedures. The following is a list of best practices for preventing harassment based on sexual orientation recommended by the youth serving organizations above:

- sexual minorities are visible in the organization
- an ally from the dominant culture stands up for sexual minorities’ rights
- the organization offers training that addresses competencies in working with sexual minorities
- the organization has lesbian and gay organizations on its referral or resource list
- the organization reviews curricular materials for bias or stereotypes
- the organization’s policies that protect sexual minorities are highly visible
- leadership in the organization supports sexual diversity competence
- there are procedures for handling harassment, intimidation, or bullying
- there is a gay-straight alliance club in the organization that is visible to members
- there is training for addressing slurs and inappropriate language.

Adoption of these promising practices may indicate organizational support for LGBT youth audiences.

Extension’s Popular 4-H program
4-H had its origins at the beginning of the 20th century when farming clubs were formed for rural youth that incorporated the latest agricultural science from land-grant colleges and experiment stations. When the USDA formed the Cooperative Extension Service, it supported these clubs under the 4-H name. Today, 4-H has shifted from its focus on farming technology and rural youth, to life skills development for rural, suburban, and urban youth. Now 4-H has between six and seven million participants and describes itself as the largest non-formal youth development organization in the nation (National 4-H Headquarters, n.d.).

4-H is supported by USDA, the Cooperative Extension System, and land-grant colleges and universities. Its leadership is comprised of youth development specialists who are supported by the research activities of the land-grant universities. In the vast majority of counties across the nation, university Extension agents are available to assist adult volunteers in the leadership of 4-H clubs focused on youth development. 4-H continues to be one of the most visible and popular programs of Cooperative Extension, and is frequently showcased when legislators propose cutting Cooperative Extension funding (Astroth 2003; McDowell, 2004). 4-H brings youth development science to citizens.

4-H and Sexual Orientation
Research on the experiences of LGBT youth in 4-H is in its infancy. We can document 4-H’s organizational commitment to diversity in its workforce, its program audiences, and its non discrimination policies, but we know little about 4-H’s interaction with sexual minority youth audiences and nothing about 4-H leaders’ support for lesbians and gays. Below are the researcher’s efforts to identify research materials that would be relevant to a study of sexual orientation and 4-H.

4-H and Sexual Orientation Research

4-H Database

A 2006 database focused on 4-H lists studies conducted by graduate students across the nation from 2003 to 2005 (Scholl, 2006). Of the dozens of studies conducted, none focused on diversity or sexual orientation issues. Just one study looked at state leader attitudes---in this case working with special needs youth (Boone et al., 2006). The researchers measured the attitudes of 4-H county Extension agents and program assistants and made recommendations for 4-H in accommodating special needs youth or youth with disabilities. They suggested 4-H organizations provide in-service opportunities to improve competency and knowledge, provide in-service opportunities to assist in adapting current 4-H programs and projects, provide awareness programs to increase understanding and acceptance, and showcase 4-H programs that have successfully engaged this population (Boone et al.).

WorldCat Database
A search in the WorldCat database revealed just two studies that were tangentially related to 4-H and diversity competency. Burke developed a questionnaire for 4-H professionals in North Carolina that looked at professionals’ competency (2002). He asked respondents to rate on a five point Likert scale their knowledge of 48 competencies, how important they deemed them, and how frequently they used them. One question asked respondents to rate their knowledge of cultural competence. His research did not attempt to define cultural competence (Burke).

In her 2004 research on positive youth development outcomes among Florida 4-H participants, Thomas included five questions about safety in 4-H (2004). None of the questions were designed to uncover diversity challenges, although she did ask whether or not participants in 4-H felt “embarrassed or put down” (Thomas). She did not ask her respondents why they felt embarrassed.

After completing searches in the Journal of Extension, WorldCat database, Agricola, Scholl’s new 4-H database, Academic Search Premier, ERIC and other resources, it appears that little is known about sexual minority youth and 4-H.

**LGBT Resources Within Extension**

Even though little has been written about 4-H and LGBT youth, some 4-H professionals recognize that LGBT youth are a viable 4-H audience who need special accommodations. Resources are available regarding working with sexual minority youth that were either written by 4-H professionals or are available on Extension websites such as CSREES. While limited, the following documents provide direction to 4-H
professionals working with sexual minority youth and indicate a clear intent to create positive experiences for sexual minority youth in 4-H.

*Family Issues newsletter.*

An online newsletter for educators produced by the University of Maine Cooperative Extension, called *Family Issues*, devoted an entire issue to working with sexual minority youth (Creating Safe Spaces, 2004). Called, “Creating Safe Spaces for All Youth – Working with Gay, Lesbian, Bisexual, Transgender and Questioning Youth,” the issue covered terminology, youth development theory, grade level information for educators talking to youth about sexual orientation, what teachers can do in their schools to make them safe for sexual minority youth, information on gay-straight alliance clubs, and resources.

*California 4-H Center for Youth Development.*

Stephen Russell, past director of the 4-H Center for Youth Development, University of California, Davis, wrote about sexual minority youth and his work is linked to the California 4-H website under Staff Resources. Russell co-authored with the California Safe Schools Coalition, a document called, “Safe Place to Learn – Consequences of Harassment Based on Actual or Perceived Sexual Orientation and Gender Non-Conformity and Steps for Making Schools Safer” (California Safe Schools, 2004). It documents widespread harassment of sexual minority youth in California schools, the negative consequences of harassment, unsafe school climates for sexual
minority youth in California, and recommendations for making schools safe. 4-H youth are not mentioned in the document.


*Essential competencies for 4-H youth professionals.*

Sexual orientation is mentioned in a 2004 study by the 4-H National Development Task Force that identifies essential competencies for future 4-H youth development professionals (Stone & Rennekamp, 2004). Under the competency “interacting effectively and equitably with diverse individuals and building long-term relationships with diverse communities,” the authors list sensitivity as an important skill, including being, “ . . . aware of and open to youth and volunteers who are diverse based on Primary Dimensions of Diversity (more permanent, impossible or hard to change) such as: Race/Ethnicity, Gender and Sexual Orientation, Age, Physical Differences and Abilities, Learning Differences and Abilities” (Stone & Rennekamp, p. 15).

*CYFERnet.*

Extension resources are available to assist 4-H professionals working with LGBT youth. Children, Youth, and Families Education and Research Network (CYFERnet) is the training and technical assistance wing of a congressionally supported project called Children, Youth, and Families at Risk (CYFAR) (CYFERnet, n.d.; CYFAR, n.d.). CYFERnet brings together Extension professionals and land-grant university faculty to
provide science-based resources for improving communities’ success in supporting healthy human development (CYFERnet, n.d.). It provides peer reviewed publications and electronic resources to community organizations serving families (CYFERnet). CYFERnet’s internal search engine in fall 2007 provided links to the following sexual minority youth resources from land-grant institutions or Cooperative Extension agencies: a publication from the University of Maine Cooperative Extension that lists critical practices related to working with sexual minority families; a University of Georgia PowerPoint that includes sexual orientation in the context of adolescent sexuality, including implication for programs; and the “Safe Place to Learn” study from the 4-H Center for Youth Development, University of California, Davis, cited above. They list additional resources from sources outside Extension including: questions and answers from the American Psychological Association; an Advocates for Youth document outlining risks and making recommendations for programmatic support; a Parents and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) document recommending support, education and advocacy; an Advocates for Youth website; a link to Gay Lesbian and Straight Education Network (GLSEN) which educates to end anti-gay bias in the nation’s K-12 school system; and a publication of the UCLA School of Law examining the economic impact of providing marriage rights to same-sex couples (CYFERnet).

Summary

While there are very few works that directly address working with sexual minority youth in 4-H, Extension sites that support 4-H professionals provide resources
on working with sexual minority youth and indicate an organization moving toward diversity competence and a willingness to engage lesbian and gay youth audiences.

Assessing 4-H Leaders’ Sexual Diversity Competence

_Leadership Influences Diversity Competence_

Recent studies on organizational diversity suggest that leadership support is the indicator that has the greatest impact on organizational climate (Ng, 2005; Ryland, 2002; Wieland, 2004;). A study that measured attitudes toward homosexuals on small college campuses concluded that leadership at colleges impacted campuses’ negative attitudes toward homosexuals (Hinrichs & Rosenberg, 2002). Ingram also recognized Extension leadership as key to moving the organization forward on diversity (2005). 4-H leaders’ knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors toward lesbians and gays are measurable and impact state organizations’ readiness to provide safe environments for LGBT youth audiences.

_Measuring Knowledge_

Attitude scales and knowledge tests have been used widely to assess prejudice toward sexual minorities. For example, teachers’ views of gay or lesbian parents (Bliss & Harris, 1999); university students’ knowledge and attitudes toward homosexuality
(Wells & Franken, 1987); social workers’ negative affective responses to gay, lesbian, and bisexual clients (Snively, 2004); principals’ attitudes toward homosexuality (Condie, 2005); pre-service teachers’ knowledge and attitudes toward gay, lesbian, bisexual, or transgendered students (Morgan, 2003); school psychologists’ attitudes toward lesbians and gays (Savage, 2002); attitudes of school administrators toward lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgendered students (Doubet, 2002); the effects of interventions on pre-service teachers’ knowledge, attitudes, and behaviors regarding homosexuality (Riggs, 2001; Fisher, 1996). A knowledge test originally developed by Sears (1992) and modified by Harris, Nightengale, and Owens (1995) to measure nurses, social workers, and psychologists’ knowledge about homosexuality was found to be most relevant to 4-H state leaders. The scale has also been used to measure the knowledge levels of college and high school students (Harris & Vanderhoof, 1995), teachers (Bliss & Harris, 1999), and pre-service teachers (Morgan, 2003).

Measuring Attitudes

Psychologists have defined a number of constructs and developed scales that attempt to describe and measure prejudice toward homosexuals. Scales that measure homophobia, heterosexism, and homonegativity can be found in the literature (Lingiardi, Falanga, & D’Augelli, 2005; Raja & Stokes, 1998; Worthington, Dillon, & Becker-Shutte, 2005). Two popular instruments have been used widely: Hudson and Ricketts’ (1980) Index of Homophobia, and Herek’s (1988) Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Attitudes Toward Gay Males.
Traditional Scales

Recently researchers have argued for updating these instruments, since knowledge and attitudes toward homosexuals have evolved significantly over the last twenty years and many individuals recognize that overt prejudice toward homosexuals is no longer widely accepted (Morrison & Morrison, 2002; Raja & Stokes, 1998; Worthington, Dillon, & Becker-Schutte, 2005). For example, researchers found that on a campus where students had low prejudice scores on traditional attitudes scales, over two-thirds of students reported it was unsafe to come out as gay or lesbian, two-fifths of gay and lesbian students reported being verbally harassed, and two-thirds of lesbians and gays surveyed reported it was likely a sexual minority would be attacked on campus (Norris, 1992; Balanko, 1998; in Morrison and Morrison, 2002). Traditional attitude scales were no longer capturing subtle, underlying beliefs that supported anti-homosexual behaviors.

Modern Scales

The development of new instruments has taken at least two directions: updating the language and the issues that define modern prejudice toward homosexuals to create “modern scales” (Morrison & Morrison, 2002; Raja & Stokes, 1998), and new scales that attempt to describe what some researchers argue is a complex, multi-dimensional construct (Worthington, Dillon, & Becker-Schutte, 2005). New scales were needed either to capture modern, subtle sexual prejudice (Morrison & Morrison; Raja & Stokes), or to discriminate among different dimensions of homosexual prejudice, including prejudice based on heterosexuals’ knowledge about lesbians and gays, personal
discomfort toward homosexuals, institutional homophobia, religious conflict, hatred, civil rights attitudes, organizational homophobia, personal homophobia, and internalized affirmativeness (Worthington, Dillon, & Becker-Schutte). For the purpose of this research, a tool was needed that could indicate relatively subtle forms of prejudice, but not delineate the dimensions of 4-H leaders’ homophobia. Morrison and Morrison’s Modern Homonegativity Scale fit this purpose (2002).

*Measuring Male and Female Prejudice*

Separate scales have been developed to measure prejudice toward lesbians, prejudice toward gays, and prejudice toward bisexuals. Researchers have argued for identical statements and wording on these separate scales to eliminate wording effects (Morrison & Morrison, 2002). Some researchers argue that orientation-specific scales (lesbians, gays, and bisexuals) may be combined into one scale to measure prejudice toward homosexuals if less specific categories can address the researcher’s questions (Worthington, Dillon, & Schutte, 2005, p. 115). Others argue for the importance of distinguishing between respondents with potentially very different attitudes toward lesbians, gays, and bisexuals. In particular, heterosexual men’s high degree of prejudice toward homosexual men is hidden by a scale that combines attitudes toward lesbians and attitudes toward gays into one scale (Herek, 2000).

Given this research’s purpose--to provide an initial indicator of 4-H leaders’ readiness to support lesbians and gays--it was thought that a relatively simple measure of modern homophobia that combines attitudes toward lesbians and attitudes toward gays
would be appropriate. Some literature suggests that agricultural societies will be less accepting of gays than lesbians, and separate scales for lesbians and gays would allow this theory to be tested (Bell, 2000; Kraack & Kenway, 2002; Liepins, 2000). It was felt by the researcher, however, that respondents may have limited patience for an attitude scale that was highly repetitive and repeated identical questions concerning attitudes toward lesbians and attitudes toward gays. It was also felt that a basic attitude scale, coupled with a knowledge test, would provide an adequate initial snapshot of state organization leaders and their readiness to support lesbians and gays. State leaders were asked to respond to twelve statements that applied to lesbians and gays.

*Measuring Promising Practices*

In addition to looking at leaders’ knowledge and attitudes, the researcher determined that a state organization’s adoption of best practices for addressing sexual minority youth audiences would be an important indicator of the state 4-H leadership’s readiness to support lesbian and gay youth. (Russell, McGuire, Laub, & Manke, 2006; Goodenow, Szalacha and Westheimer, 2006; The National Education Association, 2006; Markow & Fein, 2005; Tides Center, 2005; California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004; Szalacha, 2003; Advocates for Youth, 2002; American Civil Liberties Union, 2002).
Figure 1. Factors Influencing 4-H State Leader LGBT Readiness

4-H State Leader Demographics

Gender, Age, Sexual Identity, Race/Ethnicity, Family Status, Experience, Upbringing, Gay Friend/Family Member, Religiosity, Political Identity, Region, Highest Degree, Diversity Training, Change Agent State Member

4-H State Leaders’ Readiness To Support Lesbian And Gay Youth – Assessing Leaders’ Lesbian And Gay Knowledge, Homophobic Attitudes, And Best Practice Implementation
CHAPTER 3: METHODOLOGY

The researcher used a descriptive-correlational research design and an online questionnaire to measure 4-H state leaders’ support for lesbian and gay youth. Demographic questions permitted the researcher to describe the population of interest and investigate traditional correlates of homophobia.

Subject Selection/Study Participants

In February 2009, the researcher secured a list of current state 4-H leaders from National 4-H Headquarters. The list was entitled, State 4-H Program Leaders, and included the 78 contacts who had responded to the National 4-H Headquarters’ request in September of 2008 for a list of current state 4-H program leaders. Some states included contacts for both 1862 and 1890 institutions. Of those 78 addresses, 74 addresses were valid and became the subjects of the research.

In March, 2009, The Ohio State University’s Behavioral and Social Sciences Institutional Review Board, Office of Responsible Research Practices reviewed the research design, and the research was approved. (Protocol Number 2008B0317; 4-H and Sexual Minority Youth – Assessing 4-H State Leaders’ Practices, Knowledge, and Attitudes)
Instrumentation

The researcher developed a questionnaire to measure 4-H state leader gay and lesbian knowledge, 4-H state leader homophobic attitudes, and state 4-H organization best practice implementation. Section I had five questions about the visibility of lesbians and gays in the 4-H organization and eight questions that made up the best practice checklist, Section II was a homosexuality knowledge test, Section III was a homophobia attitude scale, and Section IV collected demographic information.

Best Practices for LGBT Youth Development

In Section I of the instrument, data was collected on state 4-H organizations’ actions supporting safe spaces for sexual minority youth. Eight questions were designed by the researcher to determine whether or not state organizations had begun implementing best practices. Construct validity was provided by feedback from an expert who worked with lesbian and gay youth at a lesbian and gay community center. An example of questions from this section is, “Policies that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation are visible in our 4-H organization (web site, brochures, posters, curriculum, etc.).” Cronbach’s alpha was .740.

Some national organizations that support lesbian and gay youth recommended that lesbians and gay adults be highly visible in youth serving organizations (Advocates for Youth, 2002). An additional five questions focused on the whether leaders believed
there were lesbians and gays in the organization, and whether lesbians and gays in 4-H shared their sexual orientation with others. A typical question was “Do you know anyone in your organization who is lesbian or gay?” Construct validity was provided by feedback from an expert who worked with lesbian and gay youth at a lesbian and gay community center.

**Knowledge Scale**

Section II consisted of a knowledge test originally developed by Sears (1992) and modified by Harris, Nightengale, and Owens (1995) to measure nurses, social workers, and psychologists’ knowledge about homosexuality. The researcher modified the test for this study. The researcher deleted two items because they referred to issues that specifically concerned mental health professionals, and a third item was deleted because it tested what the author considered to be an obscure fact about homosexuals. The researcher added four items that tested sexual minority youth development knowledge.

Construct validity was provided by feedback from an expert who worked with lesbian and gay youth at a lesbian and gay community center. Cronbach’s alpha was .692. 4-H state leaders could score between 0 and 17 on a homosexuality knowledge test recognized in the literature. Respondents were given statements about homosexuals and chose *true, false, or don’t know*.

**Attitude Scale**

In Section III the researcher combined two Modern Homonegativity Scales (MHS)—one scale for measuring homophobia toward gays; one scale for measuring
homophobia toward lesbians--to measure homophobia toward lesbians and gays (Morrison & Morrison, 2002). Five answer choices ranged from strongly agree to strongly disagree. Morrison and Morrison established construct validity by comparing MHS with known scales: Herek’s Attitudes Toward Lesbians and Gay Males (short form), and Morrison, Parriag, and Morrison’s Homonegativity Scale for Lesbians and Homonegativity Scale for Gays (Morrison & Morrison, 2002). Additionally, the MHS scale authors established support for construct validity by including items that measured modern racism, modern sexism, political conservatism, and religious behavior, all of which are highly correlated with homophobia (Gorsuch & Mcfarland, 1972; Herek, 2000; Morrison & Morrison 2002; Morrison, 2003). Morrison and Morrison also established that the scale was not subject to social desirability bias (see Morrison & Morrison, 2002, for a full discussion of MHS validity and reliability). Cronbach’s alpha for Morrison & Morrison’s 12 item lesbian scale was .89 for males and .85 for females; Cronbach’s alpha for Morrison & Morrison’s 12 item gay male scale was .91 for both males and females. Morrison granted permission to use the scale and, for this research, approved combining the lesbian scale and the gay scale into one scale--12 questions--measuring attitudes toward lesbians and gays (personal email, Melanie Morrison, February 19, 2006).

Demographic Information

Section IV of the instrument consisted of 15 items that collected demographic information. (One of the questions had to be discarded, since the possible responses to the question did not include a valid response---that respondents had no diversity
specialist. Section IV therefore had 14 useable questions.) This section, with some
modification, followed a format used by Rankin (2000) in an instrument that many of
Cooperative Extension’s Change Agent States for Diversity have used to measure
campus climate for underrepresented groups. Her research included Cooperative
Extension administrators as subjects and her instrument had questions regarding sexual
minorities. Using Rankin’s format for collecting state 4-H leader demographics ensured
the questions would be relevant to Cooperative Extension professionals. A typical item
is, “In which Cooperative Extension region is your state located?”

Correlates of Homophobia

Instruments that measure sexual prejudice have found significant correlations
between homophobia and gender, racism, sexism, age, religiosity, years of education,
political affiliation, and other dimensions (Paterson, 2004; Morrison, 2003; Morrison &
Morrison, 2002; Herek, 2000; Gorsuch & McFarland, 1972). Seven of the demographic
questions were also correlates of homonegativity. Example: “I have good friends and/or
close family members who are gay or lesbian.”

A pilot study with two Cooperative Extension professionals, three 4-H state
specialists, and an LGBT youth development specialist ensured that questions were clear
and inoffensive. The researcher had a Cooperative Extension administrator, an Extension
Diversity specialist, a past state 4-H leader, an acting 4-H co-director, a 4-H professional,
and an LGBT youth development specialist review the instrument for content and face
validity. Changes were made based on their recommendations.
Data Collection

The researcher purchased a professional subscription to online questionnaire software, Survey Monkey, and transcribed the hard copy questionnaire into an online instrument. Following Dillman’s suggestion, the researcher used a four contact strategy: a pre-notice email, a brief communication that included a link to the web-based survey, a reminder message with a link to the survey, and a thank you with the same link (2007). The initial contact alerted participants to an upcoming survey five days before the release of the questionnaire, so that the questionnaire would not be discarded immediately (Dillman). The web questionnaire used an OSU logo in the upper left corner of the first page to ensure respondents recognized the document as a research instrument rather than a commercial document. The first question, “Do you know anyone in your 4-H organization that is lesbian or gay?” followed Dillman’s suggestion that the first question be a simple-to-answer question that is relevant to all subjects (2007). The questionnaire design grouped items according to subject matter--practices, knowledge, attitudes, and demographics--and used easy-to-read, large font (Dillman, 2007). As recommended, brief instructions accompanied each section, so participants were not be required to do extensive scrolling, and participants could skip questions if they choose to. At the bottom of each section, a bar graph gradually filled as respondents progressed through the questionnaire, notifying respondents of their relative progress (Dillman, 2007).
Emails were personalized and participant anonymity was retained, since questionnaires were collected at a remote SurveyMonkey site that did not collect return email addresses. Although the survey was web-based and Dillman warns about display problems, in this case leaders only had to click on a link to a SurveyMonkey web site, and display problems should have been nonexistent (Dillman).

The recruitment letters that had been developed were piloted with three different email software packages and, although they did not all appear identical in all three emails, it was determined that the letter formatting was not seriously compromised by different email software and the link to the Survey Monkey questionnaire site worked well.

The first recruitment email was sent out with the subject line, “From Jeff Soder, The Ohio State University, 4-H.” The letter described the research and alerted the addressee to a future email that would include a link to the survey instrument. A second email with the same subject line was sent five days later and included a link to the instrument. The letter emphasized the importance of the research, recognized the sensitive nature of some of the questions, and provided detailed assurances on the anonymity of the addressee’s responses.

Dillman (2007) strongly encourages the use of a prepayment to improve response rates. Since it was impractical to provide prepayment online to all addresses, in the second correspondence all 74 addressees were told they had been entered into a $100 dollar drawing for an Amazon gift card as a thank you for participating.
A third, reminder email was sent 10 days later with the same subject line and a link to the instrument. A final letter with the same subject line announcing the winner of the drawing was sent five days later. It also included a link to the instrument. In April the researcher emailed an Amazon.com $100 gift certificate to the winning respondent.

Response Rate

One respondent address was invalid, one was a duplicate, one contact provided no email address, and one respondent deferred the questionnaire to a second colleague at the same institution. That left 74 possible respondents. Of these, 50 completed the first section on best practice implementation, and 47 completed all four sections of the questionnaire—best practice implementation, knowledge test, homonegativity scale, and demographics. The three non completers were removed from analysis, leaving 47 completed questionnaires representing 64% of the possible population (N = 47). The analysis is representative of those who participated in all four sections of the research. Seventy-three percent of the possible addressees from the Western Region responded, 69% of the possible addressees from the North Central Region responded, 61% of the possible addressees from the Northeast Region responded, and 57% of the possible addressees from the Southern Region responded.

History Validity

While there has been significant attention paid to lesbians and gays’ right to marry in the popular press in the spring of 2009, survey responses preceded the national press’s coverage of Iowa, Vermont, and New York State’s validation of gay marriage.
The researcher, therefore, was not concerned about by history validity errors despite lesbian and gay rights being highly visible in the popular media.

Confidentiality

There were a number of questions on the instrument that some respondents might have found sensitive, and the researcher recognized the importance of providing anonymity to respondents if he expected their participation. Anonymity could not be guaranteed over the internet, since hackers, theoretically, can penetrate any system, but rules were put in place to make respondents feel as safe as possible. Respondents were reminded that Survey Monkey would encrypt the data, so that it could not be easily intercepted. They were assured that no return email addresses would be recorded at the collection site. Respondents also were guaranteed that no sensitive variable would be reported if it contained fewer than five subjects; labels with fewer than five subjects would be combined and recoded to meet a five subject minimum requirement.

Missing Data

The instrument allowed respondents to skip questions, and the researcher’s treatment of skipped or missing data is explained under each of the four sections. Where demographic data was missing, the researcher added an additional label for the variable and coded it Missing (Missing = 9). Missing demographic variables were excluded pair-wise from analysis.
CHAPTER 4: RESULTS

Research Questions

Research Question #1

What are the characteristics of 4-H state leaders?

The 4-H state leader population was made up of twenty-six females (55.3%) and twenty males (42.6%). (There was one missing data point.) Twenty-nine (61.8%) respondents were 53 years of age and older (Due to low numbers, the 53 - 62 and over 62 categories were re-coded 53 and older.) Twelve (25.5%) were 43 - 52. Six leaders (12.8%) were 33 - 42. The only sexual identity label (homosexual, bisexual, transgendered, other) that met the five subject requirement for reporting was heterosexual. Thirty-nine leaders identified as white (83%), and seven marked one of the other race/ethnicity categories (14.9%). No other race/ethnicity label met the 5 minimum criteria. (There was one missing data point.) Thirty-four (72.3%) leaders identified as married; six (12.8%) identified as single; and another six (12.8%) identified as separated, divorced, or widowed. (There was one missing data point.) One leader had been in the position less than one year (2.1%). Ten had been in their positions 1 - 3 years (21.3%).
Fifteen leaders had been in their positions for 4 - 6 years (31.9%). Six had been in their positions 7 - 10 years (12.8%), and 15 had been there more than 10 years (31.9%).

Table 1 describes the environments state leaders grew up in. Nineteen (40.4%) grew up on a farm. Another eight (17.0%) grew up in a rural setting (rural, non farm and combination farm and nonfarm were re-coded rural due to small cell size.). Eight (17%) grew up in a small town. Ten leaders (21.3%) grew up in a suburban or urban setting. (Suburban and urban were re-coded urban due to small cell size.). Four leaders (8.3%) grew up in other environments.

Table 1.
Upbringing Variables

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>Percent</th>
<th>Cumulative Percent</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Farm</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>40.4</td>
<td>40.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>57.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Small town</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>17.0</td>
<td>74.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Suburban and urban</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>21.3</td>
<td>95.7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>4.3</td>
<td>100.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>47</td>
<td>100.0</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Twenty-nine leaders (61.7%) said they had participated in a diversity training within the past year, and 18 (38.3%) marked they had not. Sixteen respondents (34%) were from the Southern Region, 11 respondents (23.4%) were from the Northeast Region, 11 (23.4%) were from the Western Region, and nine (19.1%) were from the North Central Region. Twenty-seven of the respondents (57%) held Doctorate degrees, and 20 (43%) held Master’s degrees. Eighteen respondents (38.3%) were part of a Change Agent States initiative, 12 (25.5%) were not, and 17 (36%) were not sure.

*Research Question #2*

*How do 4-H state leaders score on a test measuring knowledge about sexual minorities compared to similar education professionals?*

Section two of the questionnaire was a lesbian and gay knowledge test first developed by Sears and modified by the researcher (1992). There were 17 questions that measured knowledge about lesbians and gays. Correct answers received 1 point, and incorrect or I don’t know answers received no points. None of the 47 leaders skipped any of the questions. Questions 4, 5, 8, 12, 14, 15, 16, and 17 were reverse scored. Respondents could score between 0 (none correct) and 17 (all correct). Figure 2 illustrates the state leaders’ knowledge score distribution, mean, and standard deviation.
Figure 2. 4-H Leader Knowledge Score Distribution

In Figure 2 we see the mean score ($\mu = 10.34$) was above the test midpoint (8.5), and there was substantial variability ($SD = 3.91$). The distribution curve supports the knowledge test as an effective tool for discriminating between state leaders’ varying degrees of knowledge regarding lesbian and gay issues.

It was difficult to assess how 4-H state leaders scored compared to similar professionals for at least two reasons: other populations that took Sears’ knowledge test were similar, but not identical to, 4-H state leaders, and researchers who used the lesbian and gay knowledge test with other audiences modified it to some degree to fit their
populations of interest (Sears, 1992; Harris, Nightengale, & Owen, 1995; Harris & Vanderhoof, 1995; Bliss & Harris, 1999; Koch, 2000). While the test differs somewhat from study-to-study, and other studies focused on students, educators, and mental health professionals, a comparison of scores still sheds light on 4-H state leaders’ relative performance.

In a study of 97 health care professionals (nurses, social workers, psychologists) participants scored 82% correct on a modified Sears test. The study had a very low return rate (32%), and the test questions were significantly modified by the researchers (Harris, Nightengale, & Owen, 1995). In a study of 210 college students and 31 high school students, participants scored 72% and 63% respectively on the Sears test (Harris & Vanderhoof, 1995). In a study of 107 teachers, participants scored 65% correct on the Sears test (Bliss & Harris, 1999). More recently, 799 pre-service teachers scored 53% correct on the Sears lesbian and gay knowledge test (Koch, 2000). State 4-H leaders’ 61% correct score falls between teachers’ scores and pre-service teachers’ scores.

More than 80% of state 4-H leaders marked the following questions correct:

- Some church denominations oppose legal and social discrimination against homosexual men and women. The correct answer was true. Eighty-eight percent marked the correct answer.

- Most high school students who identify as lesbian or gay report being harassed in school. The correct answer was true. Eighty-one percent marked the correct answer.
• Bisexuality is characterized by sexual behaviors and/or responses to both sexes. The correct answer was true. Eighty percent marked the correct answer.

Fewer than 50% of state 4-H leaders marked the following questions correct.

• Historically, almost every culture has evidenced widespread intolerance toward homosexuals, viewing them as sick or as sinners. The correct answer was false. (13% correct)

• Many sex researchers consider sexual behavior as a continuum from exclusively homosexual to exclusively heterosexual. The correct answer was true. Thirty-eight percent marked the correct answer.

• Sexual orientation is established at an early age. The correct answer is true. Forty-four percent marked the correct answer.

• Gay men are more likely to be victims of violent crime than the general public. The correct answer was true. Forty-nine percent marked the correct answer.

In summary, 4-H state leader knowledge scores were below health care professionals and mental health specialists, but above pre-service teachers. Researchers’ modifications of the Sears knowledge test made comparisons across studies difficult, and in the comparison study where participants received the highest knowledge scores, the study was compromised by low return rates.

Research Question #3

How do state leaders score on a scale measuring modern homonegativity toward lesbians and gays compared to similar educational professionals?
Section three of the questionnaire was a 12 statement summated rating scale, called the Modern Homonegativity Scale, designed to measure state leaders’ attitudes (homophobia) towards lesbians and gays (Morrison & Morrison, 2002). Morrison & Morrison’s developed two scales---one asking about lesbians, and a second asking about gays. The two scales have identical wording. For the purpose of this study, the scales were combined and respondents were asked to respond to 12 statements about lesbians and gays. Respondents chose between the following five responses following each statement: 1 = Strongly disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = I don’t know, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly agree. A total score was calculated for each respondent, ranging from 12 (low homonegativity) to 60 (high homonegativity). Questions 3, 6, and 9 were reverse scored.

There was one skipped or missing data point. Following George and Mallery’s recommendation, the researcher substituted the mean of surrounding points--on a scale of 1-5, the mean was 3--for the missing score (2003). Figure 3 illustrates the distribution, mean, and standard deviation for state 4-H leaders.
In Figure 3 we see a relatively normal distribution of scores. The mean score ($\mu = 30.83$) was below the midpoint (36) and there was significant variability among scores (SD = 8.37). One outlier scored 16 points higher than the next highest scorer and received the highest possible homonegativity (highest homophobia) score. The relatively normal curve suggests the homonegativity scale was successful in discriminating between state leaders’ varying degrees of homonegative attitudes toward lesbians and gays.
Morrison & Morrison, who developed the scale, used it to measure homonegativity among Canadian college male and female students in an introductory psychology class (Morrison & Morrison, 2002). In the Morrison & Morrison study, they used separate scales with identical wording to measure homonegativity towards lesbians and homonegativity towards and gays. Of the 33 males and 82 females who completed the gay male scale, mean scores were 41.9 and 37.3 respectively (Morrison & Morrison). The average for both genders was 39.6. Of the 31 males and 87 females who completed the lesbian scale, the mean scores were 42.8 and 38.8 respectively. The average for both genders was 40.8. The average score for all four groups of Canadian students was 40.2. State 4-H leaders mean score (µ = 30.8) was below the Canadian college students; there were almost no differences between male and female state 4-H leader scores. In summary, state 4-H leaders had a wide range of homonegativity scores with a mean score below the scale’s midpoint and below the mean for Canadian college freshman.

Research Question #4

To what extent does 4-H implement best practices for a sexual minority youth audience?

The first section of the questionnaire contained eight questions that were drawn from the literature regarding best practices for working with gay and lesbian youth in educational settings. Leaders were given a point if they answered yes to statements about the implementation of best practices. No and I don’t know responses scored a zero. Six missing data points were treated as incorrect, and received a zero. Scores could range
from zero to eight. In Figure 4 the researcher provides the distribution, mean, and standard deviation of state leaders score on the best practice inventory.

Figure 4. 4-H Leader Best Practices Score Distribution

In Figure 4 we see a normal distribution of scores that are positively skewed by high scorers. The mean score ($\mu = 3.79$) was below the midpoint (4) and there was relatively little variability ($SD = 2.03$). A normal curve suggests the best practice scale
was successful in discriminating between leaders’ varying degrees of best practice implementation.

A high percentage of state organizations had implemented one or more best practices for working with lesbian and gay youth. Ninety percent of respondents checked that they had visible non discrimination policies that prohibited discrimination based on sexual orientation. Sixty-four percent reported their Extension Director supported competency in sexual minority issues. Leaders’ best practice implementation scores were the lowest on referrals to lesbian and gay organizations (9%), visible straight allies (26%), and professionals receiving training on lesbian and gay youth issues (31%).

In summary, state 4-H leader mean scores ranked a little below the midpoint on the best practice implementation questions. Virtually all organizations had implemented some best practices, such as non discrimination policies, and very few organizations made referrals to lesbian and gay organizations, had visible straight allies, and provided training on lesbian and gay youth.

**Research Question #5**

*Do state leader demographics predict high, medium, or low scorers?*

**Recoding**

*Group frequency distributions.*

To answer question five, the researcher converted knowledge, homonegativity, and best practice scores into categorical data by following King & Minium’s suggestion for constructing group frequency distributions (2003). The goal was to develop categorical data that could be analyzed using contingency tables and the Cramer’s V
modification of the chi-square statistic. It was important to reduce variables into as few labels as possible, so that contingency tables had reasonable expected cells counts. Knowledge, homonegativity (homophobia), and best practices scores were divided into three groups---high, medium and low scorers. The grouped frequency distributions that were developed are illustrated in Table 2.

Table 2.
Knowledge, Homonegativity, and Best Practice Grouped Frequency Distributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Low</th>
<th>Medium</th>
<th>High</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>0-5</td>
<td>6-11</td>
<td>12-17</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homonegativity</td>
<td>10-24</td>
<td>25-39</td>
<td>40-60a</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best practice</td>
<td>0-2</td>
<td>3-5</td>
<td>6-8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

a The range was increased to include one outlier score of 60.

*Demographic recoding.*

Demographics included gender, age, sexual identity, race/ethnicity, family status, experience, upbringing, gay friends/family members, religiosity, political identity, region, highest degree, diversity training, and change agent state member. Again, variables were recoded so that frequency tables with high cell counts could be generated. No demographic variable was permitted more than two labels in order to increase cell count.
Three variables sexual orientation, race/ethnicity, and political affiliation logically separated into two labels (heterosexual/other; white/other; conservative/liberal). Two divisions were based on large percentages falling under one label and the rest under another label: Family status was recoded married (72.3%) and other; religiosity was recoded very religious (40.4%) and other. The Experience variable fell easily into two labels with approximately equal numbers in each group (less than or equal to six years experience [55.3%]; greater than or equal to seven years experience [44.7%]).

Recoding upbringing was more challenging since it was not clear how to collapse six different labels. To make a determination the researcher analyzed a Homonegativity X Upbringing contingency table (Table 3) that included all six labels.
Table 3.
Homonegativity X Upbringing Contingency Table

Upbringing (all labels)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Farm</th>
<th>Rural</th>
<th>Combo</th>
<th>Town</th>
<th>Suburb</th>
<th>Urban</th>
<th>Count</th>
<th>Expected Count</th>
<th>% within Original upbringing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Low Homonegative Score</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10-24 Count</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>19</td>
<td>4.4</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Original upbringing</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Medium Homonegative Score</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>25-39 Count</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>4</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>11.7</td>
<td>78.9%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Original upbringing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>High Homonegative Score</strong></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>40-54 Count</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>1</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>0</td>
<td></td>
<td>2.8</td>
<td>10.5%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% within Original upbringing</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td>19</td>
<td>6</td>
<td>2</td>
<td>8</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>3</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>% of Total</td>
<td>40.4%</td>
<td>12.8%</td>
<td>4.3%</td>
<td>17.0%</td>
<td>14.9%</td>
<td>6.4%</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Expected cell counts were too low for a chi square statistic to be meaningful, but the table did allow the researcher to determine how groups were similar and different regarding their homonegativity. The goal was to combine groups that had similar homonegativity scores. The table showed that leaders with farm and rural upbringings score similarly, with large percentages in the middle homonegativity group; small town, suburban and urban leaders score similarly, with percentages divided between the low homonegativity group and the medium homonegativity group. For these reasons it was decided to recode combination farm and non farm, and rural non farm, as Rural; small town, suburban, and urban, were coded as Non-rural. Other was removed from analysis since no determination could be made regarding urban or rural Upbringing. (Both leaders who chose other upbringings scored in the high homonegativity group.)

Although detail was lost in the process of constructing group frequency distributions, it permitted a meaningful analysis of associations with other variables and allowed the researcher to respond to the original research questions. In Table 4 we see the variables, the original labels, and the recoded labels.
Table 4.

Original and Recoded Demographic Labels

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Variable</th>
<th>Original label</th>
<th>Recoded label</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sexual identity</td>
<td>1. Heterosexual</td>
<td>1. Heterosexual (1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Bisexual</td>
<td>2. Other (2-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Gay/lesbian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Transgender</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Uncertain</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Ethnicity/race</td>
<td>1. African American/Black</td>
<td>1. Other (1-5)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Asian/Pacific Islander</td>
<td>2. White (6)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. Middle Eastern</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. American Indian/Alaskan native</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>5. Chicano/Latino/Hispanic</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>6. White/Caucasian</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family status</td>
<td>1. Single</td>
<td>1. Married (2)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>2. Married</td>
<td>2. Other (1,3,4)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>3. In a committed relationship</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>4. Separated/divorced/widowed</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Continued
Experience
1. Less than 1 year
2. 1-3 years
3. 4-6 years
4. 7-10 years
5. More than 10 years

Growing up environment
1. Farm
2. Rural-non farm
3. Combination farm and non farm
4. Small town
5. Suburban
6. Urban
7. Other

Religiosity
1. Not at all religious
2. Slightly religious
3. Somewhat religious
4. Very religious

Continued
Political affiliation

1. Very conservative
2. Conservative
3. Somewhat conservative
4. Somewhat liberal
5. Liberal
6. Very Liberal

Knowledge, Homonegativity, and Best Practice Associations

Knowledge scores, homonegativity scores, and best practice implementation scores X demographics were run using SPSS 17 software. Cramer’s V’s modification of chi square was used to determine associations for categorical by categorical, rectangular contingency tables. Only tables where the expected frequency per cell was ≥ 2 were considered interpretable (Hopkins, Hopkins & Glass, 1996). The researcher followed Cohen’s suggestion (.1 small; .3 medium; .5 large) for interpreting measures of association (Cohen in Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, 2002). Medium and greater associations (≥ .3) were noted.

Knowledge X Demographics.

In Table 5 we see Cramer’s V statistic for all demographics X knowledge, homonegativity, and best practice scores.
Table 5.

Associations between Demographics and Knowledge, Homonegativity, and Best Practice (Cramer’s V)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Knowledge</th>
<th>Homonegative</th>
<th>Best practice</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.146</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td><strong>.367</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.139</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td>.230</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sexual identity</td>
<td>.160(^a)</td>
<td>.121(^a)</td>
<td>.152(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Race/ethnicity</td>
<td>.271(^a)</td>
<td>.283(^a)</td>
<td>.285(^a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family status</td>
<td>.158</td>
<td>.218</td>
<td>.110</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Experience</td>
<td>.192</td>
<td>.203</td>
<td>.211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Upbringing</td>
<td>.270</td>
<td><strong>.493</strong></td>
<td>.225</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay friend/family</td>
<td>.128</td>
<td>.285</td>
<td>.243</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>.166</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td>.277</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political identity</td>
<td><strong>.309</strong></td>
<td><strong>.543</strong></td>
<td><strong>.476</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td><strong>.320</strong></td>
<td>.292</td>
<td>.238</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest degree</td>
<td><strong>.341</strong></td>
<td>.130</td>
<td>.192</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Diversity training</td>
<td>.109</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td><strong>.385</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Change Agent State</td>
<td>.123</td>
<td>.242</td>
<td>.203</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Note. Cramer’s V statistic. Associations >3 are bolded.
\(^a\) Expected cell count is < 2.
Associations between state leaders’ knowledge of lesbians and gays and leader demographics were relatively small, although political identity (.309), region (.320), and highest degree (.341) had medium associations with knowledge.

In the Knowledge X Political identity contingency table, conservatives were equally spread over high (35%), middle (35%), and low (30%) knowledge groups while the majority (56%) of the liberals were in the high knowledge category, and a minority (7.4%) were in the low knowledge category. Overall, leaders who were coded liberal scored higher than conservatives on the lesbian and gay knowledgeable test.

Most of the North Central and Northeast state leaders scored in the high knowledge group (77.8% and 63.6% respectively). The largest percentage of Southern and Western leaders scored in the middle group (43.8% and 45.5% respectively). Of the eight low scorers, four were from the Southern Region, and three were from the Western Region. Overall, the North Central and Northeast leaders had the highest knowledge scores, and the Southern and Western leaders had the lowest knowledge scores. Results were hampered by three cell counts below two (1.5, 1.9, 1.9; total cells = 12).

For the Knowledge X Highest degree table, 57% of leaders with Doctorate degrees were in the high knowledge group, with the rest equally divided between the middle (22.2%) and the low (22.2%) groups. Fifty-five percent of the leaders with Master’s degrees scored in the middle knowledge group, with 35% in the high and 10% in the low. Leaders with Master’s degrees were neither the highest nor the lowest scorers. Leaders with Doctorate degrees scored higher and lower than expected cell
counts. Cell count criteria were achieved, but small numbers made interpretation
difficult.

In summary liberal coded leaders scored higher in knowledge than conservative
coded leaders, North Central and Northeast leaders scored higher in knowledge than
leaders from the Southern and Western Regions, and a greater percentage of the leaders
with Doctorate degrees scored in the high knowledge group.

*Homonegativity X Demographics.*

In Table 5 we see the Cramer’s V statistic of association for homonegativity by
leader demographics. Associations between homonegativity and state leader
demographics were often similar in size to associations between knowledge and
demographics. Two large associations between homonegativity and demographics are
notable: upbringing (.493), and political identity (.543).

Recoding the upbringing variable resulted in 27 state leaders coded rural (*farms*,
*rural non farm, and farm and non farm*) and 18 coded non-rural (*small town, suburban
and urban*). Most (77.8%) of the rural leaders scored in the medium homonegativity
group. Seven percent (7.4%) of rural leaders scored in the low group, and 14.8 % scored
in the high group. Non-rural leaders were almost equally divided between the low (50%)
and medium (44.4%) homonegativity groups. Four of five leaders in the high
homonegativity group were from rural environments. Overall, non-rural leaders had
lower homonegativity scores than rural leaders.

Recoding the political identity variable resulted in 20 leaders coded conservative
(*very conservative, conservative, somewhat conservative*) and 27 leaders coded liberal
(somewhat liberal, liberal, very liberal). The majority of both conservative and liberal leaders scored in the middle homonegativity group (70% and 55.6% respectively). No conservative leader scored in the low homonegativity group; 11 liberal leaders received low homonegativity scores. Six conservative leaders and one liberal leader scored in the high homonegativity group. Leaders that identified as liberal had lower homonegativity scores than leaders who identified as conservative.

Overall, leaders who identified as non-rural or liberal had lower homonegativity scores than leaders who identified as rural or conservative, and these associations were of a large magnitude.

Best Practice X Demographics.

In Table 5 we see listed the Cramer’s V statistic for Best practice X 4-H leader demographics. Contingency tables revealed medium associations between best practice and gender (Cramer’s V=.367), and best practice and diversity training (Cramer’s V = .385). There was a large association between best practice and political identity (Cramer’s V = .476).

Female leaders were evenly distributed among the three practice groups [(low = 30.8%), (middle = 34.6%), (high = 34.6%)], and male leaders were predominantly in the middle practice group (70%). Few male leaders were in the high best practice group (10%), and the remainder was in the low best practice group (20%). Overall, female leaders reported a full range of best practice implementation, while males reported being in the middle range of best practice implementation.
There was a medium association between best practice and participated in diversity training in the last year. Twenty-nine leaders said they participated in diversity training, and 18 leaders said they had not. Ten of the leaders who had been to training were in the high best practice group; only one of the 18 leaders who had not been to training was in the high best practice group. Roughly half of both groups scored in the middle best practice group (trained = 48.3%; untrained = 50.0 %). Seventeen percent (17.2%) of trained leaders were in the low best practice group, while 44% of leaders without training were in the low group. In general, leaders who had been to training were much more likely to be in the high best practice group, and leaders without training were likely to be in the middle and low best practice group.

A large association was found between best practice and political identity. The 11 leaders who scored in the high best practice group all identified as liberal (representing 40.7 % of the liberal label). The remaining liberal leaders were divided between medium and low best practice implementation (37 % and 22.2 % respectively). Leaders labeled conservative were divided between medium and low best practice implementation (65 % and 35 % respectively). Liberal leaders scored higher than conservative leaders on the best practices implementation questions, and the association was large.

Research Question #6

Is the extent of best practice implementation correlated with 4-H state leader sexual minority knowledge score, homonegativity score, demographic information, or state policy?

The researcher divided the question into four sub-questions:
- Are leaders’ best practice scores correlated with knowledge scores?
- Are best practice scores correlated with homonegativity scores?
- Are best practice scores associated with 4-H state leader demographics?
- Are best practice scores correlated with state policies?

**Best Practice X Knowledge X Homonegativity**

To answer the first and second sub-question—the relationship between Best Practice X Knowledge and Best Practice X Homonegativity—the researcher used the Pearson product moment statistic to determine if there was a correlation between best practice scores, knowledge scores, and homonegativity scores. The researcher followed Cohen’s recommendation on interpreting the effect sizes of correlations (r = .10 small; r = .30 medium; r = .50 large) (Cohen in Ary, Jacobs, Razavieh, 2002). Table 6 provides the size of the correlation between practices, knowledge, and homonegativity scores.

Table 6.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Knowledge X Homonegativity X Best Practice Correlations (ρ)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Practices</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best Practice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homonegative</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

84
There was a small (.174) positive correlation between best practices scores and knowledge scores. As best practice implementation scores increased, knowledge scores increased. There was a small (-.162) negative correlation between best practices scores and homonegativity scores. As best practice implementation increased, homonegativity scores decreased. There was a large (-.498) negative correlation between homonegativity scores and knowledge test scores. As knowledge scores increased, homonegativity scores decreased.

*Best Practice X Demographics*

The third sub-question, is best practice implementation correlated with demographic information, was answered in research question 4 above. Medium associations were found between best practices and gender and best practices and diversity training. A large association was found between best practices and political identity. Leaders who were female and leaders who participated in diversity training in the last year scored higher on the best practices questions than leaders who were male or had not participated in training. Leaders who were coded as liberal scored higher on the best practices questions than leaders coded conservative.

*Best Practice X Non Discrimination Policy*

The relationship between best practice implementation and state policy could not be answered by the questionnaire for two reasons: To preserve respondents’ anonymity, respondents were not asked to identify which state they were from, and it was impossible to link individual state policy statements to leaders’ best practice implementation scores. Second, virtually all respondents (90%) marked that they had visible, non discrimination
policies, making it appear that policy, or policy visibility, had little impact on the varying degrees of best practice implementation that were recorded on the questionnaire.

Research Question # 7

What are the correlates of high knowledge/low homophobia for 4-H leaders?

Question seven is a summary question that pulls together analysis already completed in response to questions 1-5. In Table 7 we see listed the largest associations between Knowledge X Demographics and Homonegativity X Demographics. Where associations are medium or larger, interpretations are provided.

Table 7.

High Knowledge/Low Homonegative Associations (Cramer’s V)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>High knowledge score</th>
<th>Low homonegative score</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Political identity</td>
<td>.309</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>.320</td>
<td>Upbringing .493</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Highest degree</td>
<td>.341</td>
<td>Political identity .543</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

High Knowledge Associations

Medium associations were seen in knowledge X political identity, knowledge X region, and knowledge X highest degree. High knowledge was associated with leaders who identified in the liberal group. Fifty-six percent of the leaders who identified as
liberal were in the high knowledge group; thirty-five percent of the leaders who identified as conservative were in the high knowledge group.

High knowledge scores were associated with the North Central and Northeast Regions. 77.8% of North Central leaders scored in the high knowledge group and 63.6% of Northeast leaders scored in the high knowledge group. By comparison, 31.3% of Southern Region leaders and 27.3% of Western Region leaders scored in the High knowledge group. A higher percentage of leaders with Doctorate degrees (57%) than leaders with Master’s degrees (35%) scored in the high knowledge group.

**Low Homonegativity Associations**

Homonegativity had large associations with upbringing and political identity. Non-rural leaders had more low homonegativity scores (50% were low scorers) than rural leaders (7.4% were low scorers). Liberal political identity was associated with low homonegativity, since all 11 of the low homonegativity scorers were identified as liberal. Only political affiliation (*liberal*) was associated with both high knowledge and low homonegativity. There was also a large, negative correlation between knowledge scores and homonegativity scores (\(\bar{r} = -0.498\)). As knowledge decreased, homonegativity increased.

**Research Question #8**

*Do correlates of homophobia cited in the literature hold true for 4-H state leaders?*

Past studies have found that homophobia is correlated with gender, age, religiosity, political affiliation, having good gay friends, growing up in a rural environment, and years of education (Gorsuch & McFarland, 1972; Herek, 2000;
Morrison & Morrison, 2002; Morrison, 2003). In Table 8 the demographic variables that have been found to be correlated with homophobia in past studies are listed. The Cramer’s V statistic provided the measure of association between these variables and state leaders’ homonegative scores. Low values for gender, age, religiosity, having good friends or family members who are lesbian or gay, and years of education meant that they could not be considered correlates of homonegativity in this study of 4-H state leaders.

Table 8.
Homonegativity Scores X Correlates of Homophobia (Cramer’s V)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Homonegativity</th>
<th>Degree of Association</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gender</td>
<td>.087</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Age</td>
<td>.126</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Religiosity</td>
<td>.143</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Political identity</td>
<td><strong>.543</strong></td>
<td>Large association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gay friend/family member</td>
<td>.285</td>
<td>Small – medium association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Rural environment</td>
<td><strong>.493</strong></td>
<td>Large association</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Years of education</td>
<td>.130</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cramer’s V > 3 bolded.

Leaders’ upbringing had a large association with homonegativity, and leaders’ political affiliation had a large association with homonegativity. (It should be noted that
although the variable *gay friend/family member* did not reach the threshold required for interpretation (Cramer’s V > 3), almost 80% of state leaders had good friends or family members that were lesbian or gay (78.7%), and all the leaders in the lowest homonegativity group marked that they had friends or family members that were lesbian or gay. Leaders with gay friends were not entirely protected from homophobia, however. Sixteen percent (16.2%) of leaders with gay friends scored in the high homophobia group.

Non-rural leaders had lower homonegativity scores than rural leaders, and all leaders, as noted earlier, had substantially lower homonegativity scores than Canadian college freshman. Leaders that were coded conservative scored higher homonegativity scores (more homophobic) than leaders who were coded liberals.

4-H state leaders performed differently from the general population, since many accepted correlates of homophobia did not hold true for state leaders. Two correlates of homophobia—rural upbringing, and conservative political identity—were associated with homophobia for this population.

Research Question # 9

*Are lesbians and gays visible in state 4-H organizations, can lesbians and gays be open regarding their orientation, and does their visibility and openness correlate with 4-H leaders’ knowledge, homonegativity, and best practice implementation?*

The literature cited the importance of adults publicly acknowledging their sexual orientation, so they could be successful role models for lesbian and gay youth (Varjas, K., et al. 2008; Advocates for Youth, 2002). It was also important to know whether leaders
recognized they might have lesbians and gays in their organization. The researcher
developed five questions related to lesbians and gays in 4-H. Two questions asked
leaders whether there were lesbians and gays in their state organization; three questions
asked whether or not lesbians and gay adults publicly acknowledged their sexual
orientation.

The first question asking about the existence of lesbians and gays in 4-H was, “Do
you know anyone in your 4-H organization that is lesbian or gay?” It had five possible
responses:

- 26 leaders marked Yes, a 4-H professional (faculty, agent, specialist,
  administrator, Extension Associate, etc)
- 17 leaders marked Yes, a 4-H volunteer
- 12 leaders marked Yes, a 4-H youth
- 14 leaders marked No
- 3 leaders marked Not sure.

Overall, 17 (36%) leaders either did not know a lesbian or gay person or were not
sure whether they did or not. The remaining 30 leaders (64%) knew one or more lesbian
or gay person in their organization.

The research project focused on the readiness of state 4-H leaders to address the
needs of lesbian and gay youth. It was important to know whether or not leaders thought
lesbian and gay youth existed in their programs. The question, “We have lesbian or gay
4-H youth in our programs,” was designed to answer this question. It had three possible responses. There was one missing data point.

- 20 (43.5%) marked Yes.
- 0 (0%) marked No.
- 26 (56.5%) marked I don’t know.

All state 4-H leaders marked that they either had or might have lesbian and gay youth in their programs.

Openness of Lesbians and Gays in 4-H

Three questions were designed to measure the visibility of lesbians and gays in 4-H state organizations. The researcher asked about professionals and volunteers publicly acknowledging their sexual orientation to colleagues, professionals publicly acknowledging their sexual orientation to youth, and volunteers publicly acknowledging their sexual orientation to youth.

The statement, “We have lesbian or gay 4-H professionals or volunteers who are ‘out’ (publicly acknowledge their sexual orientation) to colleagues,” had three possible responses:

- 20 (42.6%) marked Yes
- 13 (27.7%) marked No
- 14 (29.8%) marked I don’t know.

Roughly two-fifths (43%) of the leaders were in organizations where there were lesbian or gay colleagues professionals who publicly acknowledged their sexual orientation.
The statement, “We have lesbian or gay 4-H professional who are out to 4-H youth,” had three possible responses:

- 4 (8.5%) marked Yes
- 22 (46.8%) marked No
- 21 (44.7%) marked I don’t know.

Very few leaders reported that professionals publicly acknowledge their sexual orientation to youth.

The fourth statement, “We have lesbian or gay 4-H volunteers who are out to 4-H youth,” had three possible responses:

- 3 (6.4%) marked Yes
- 11 (23.4%) marked No
- 33 (70.2%) marked I don’t know.

Very few leaders reported that volunteers publicly acknowledge their sexual orientation to youth, and almost three-quarters of state leaders did not know whether or not lesbian and gay volunteers publicly acknowledged their sexual orientation to youth.

Prevalence and Openness X Knowledge, Homonegativity, and Best Practices

All five questions were analyzed by running the Cramer’s V modification of the chi-square statistic to determine whether or not prevalence and visibility had an association with knowledge, homonegativity, or best practices. Associations with Cramer’s V values $\geq 3$ are interpreted.
Table 9.

Knowledge, Homonegativity, and Best Practice X Prevalence and Openness (Cramer’s V)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>I know a</th>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Professionals</th>
<th>Volunteers</th>
<th>We have</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>lesbian or gay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>gay</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>person in 4-H.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Professionals</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>volunteers</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>youth.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4-H. colleagues.</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Knowledge</td>
<td>.259</td>
<td>.089</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>.263</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Homonegativity</td>
<td>.337</td>
<td>.233</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>.375</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Best practices</td>
<td>.212</td>
<td>.240</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>a</td>
<td>.399</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Cramer’s V >3 bolded.

*Cell counts were < 2.

Adult Prevalence

The first question, “Do you know anyone in your 4-H organization that is lesbian or gay?” required recoding in order to keep cell count high and make interpretation possible. Three possible responses *(I know a gay professional, I know a gay volunteer, I know a gay youth)* were recoded, Yes, and two possible responses *(No, I don’t know)*
were recoded, No. Question 1 had a medium association with homonegativity. Most leaders were in the middle homonegative group (63.3% of the Yes responses and 58.8% of the No responses). Thirty percent of leaders who knew someone gay in the organization were in the low homonegativity group; 11.8% of leaders who did not know someone gay were in the low homonegativity group. 6.7% of the leaders who knew someone gay in the organization were in the high homonegativity group; 29.4% of the leaders who did not know someone gay in the organization were in the high homonegativity group. Overall, leaders who knew someone lesbian or gay in the organization scored lower on the homonegativity scale.

**Openness**

Associations between question 2 and knowledge, homonegativity, and best practices had low Cramer’s V values and were not interpreted. Both questions 3 and 4 had small cell numbers and did not meet the expected cell count for interpreting a chi-square statistic.

**Youth Prevalence**

Question five, “We have lesbian or gay youth in our 4-H programs,” had a medium association with homonegativity (.375) and a medium to large association with best practices (.399). One skipped question was removed from the analysis pair-wise.

Roughly half the leaders (46.9%) thought there were lesbian and gay 4-H youth in their programs, and half (53.1%) did not know whether there were or not. Of those leaders who knew they had gay youth in their organizations, 40% were in the low homonegative group and 55.5% were in the medium homonegative group. Only one
leader who thought there were lesbian or gay youth in 4-H was in the high homonegativity group.

Of those who did not know whether or not they had lesbian and gay 4-H members, 11.5% were in the low homonegativity group, 65.4% were in the middle homonegativity group, and 23.1% were in the high homonegativity group. Overall, leaders who knew they had lesbian and gay youth in their 4-H organization more often scored in the lower homonegative group than leaders who did not know whether or not they had gay and lesbian youth in their 4-H programs.

The majority of leaders who marked yes, their organizations included lesbian and gay youth, were in the middle (43.5%) and high (40%) best practice group; the majority of leaders who marked I don’t know were in the middle (56.5%) and low (38.5%) best practice group. Ten percent of the Yes leaders and 38.5% of the Don’t Know leaders were in the low best practices group. Leaders who knew they had lesbian and gay youth in their organization also had greater best practice implementation in their organizations.
CHAPTER 5: CONCLUSIONS, RECOMMENDATIONS, AND IMPLICATIONS

Background

In the early 1990s, an important policy document written by the leadership of Cooperative Extension, called *Pathway to Diversity*, argued stridently for an Extension organization that was pluralistic: “Work force and audience diversity and pluralism are key to organizational survival and success in the 21st century” (Fowler & Johnsrud, 1991, p. 4). Roughly ten years later, Extension leaders commissioned a review of Extension’s efforts to diversify. The self-study led to a report called, *Pathways to Diversity Reaffirmed* (Broadwater & Travis, 2003). In the report, the researchers commented that they could find no outcome data that showed Extension programs fostered diversity and pluralism (Broadwater & Travis).

As a result of the need for further work, Cooperative Extension charged a select group of land-grant colleges and universities to join the Change Agent States for Diversity Project to develop strategies and models for becoming a pluralistic organization (Ingram, 2005). At the beginning of the project Ingram found that Extension leaders faced significant challenges in their effort to diversify their workforce (2005). The needs of Extension’s sexual minority work force and sexual minority audiences appeared to be especially difficult for leaders to address (Ingram, 2005; Lechman, 2005). Lechman
found the Extension organizations to be almost silent with regard to lesbian and gay issues (2005).

4-H, one of Extension’s most popular national programs, is the largest, non-formal youth development program in the nation, with between six and seven million participants (National 4-H Headquarters, n.d.). Leaders of 4-H are youth development specialists who represent land-grant research institutions. While substantial literature exists regarding lesbian and gay youth in school settings, little if any has been written on lesbian and gay youths in 4-H.

It has been well documented in the educational literature that many lesbian and gay youth experience extreme prejudice in school settings and are frequently the targets of harassment and bullying (Safe Schools Coalition, 1999; Russell, McGuire et al., 2006). Lesbian and gay youth are also much more likely than their heterosexual peers to engage in high risk behaviors such as carrying a weapon to school, seriously consider suicide, miss school because they feel unsafe, report being depressed, and use methamphetamines and inhalants (Kosciw, Diaz & Greytak, 2008; Russell, McGuire et al., 2006; National Education, 2006; Markow & Fein; California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004; Safe Schools Coalition, 1999). Given lesbian and gay youth’s vulnerability, organizations serving them have developed a number of interventions to help them overcome the prejudices of the predominant society (Russell, McGuire, Laub, & Manke, 2006; Goodenow, Szalacha and Westheimer, 2006; The National Education Association, 2006; Markow & Fein, 2005; Tides Center, 2005; California Safe Schools Coalition, 2004; Szalacha, 2003; Advocates for Youth, 2002; American Civil Liberties Union, 2002). The interventions, or best practices, are actions the heterosexual population can
take to address prejudice directed toward lesbians and gays. Given the size of the organization and its importance to the youth development field, it became important to know 4-H’s status with regard to the support of this vulnerable population.

As a first step toward measuring 4-H leadership’s readiness to support lesbian and gay youth in 4-H, the researcher investigated state 4-H leaders’ knowledge, homophobic attitudes, and state organizational practices. Data were gathered from an online questionnaire completed by 47 (64%) of the 4-H state leaders (74 possible) listed on a contact sheet from the National 4-H Headquarters entitled, “State Program 4-H Leaders.” To ensure respondents’ confidence that their responses were anonymous, respondents were told their email return addresses would not be collected. The following data represents only the 47 respondents; it is not a random sample and the results cannot be generalized to 4-H state leaders in general. For the following nine research questions the researcher provides conclusions, recommendations, and implications that can be drawn from the data.

Research Questions

Question 1

What are the characteristics of 4-H state leaders?

Major conclusions

In this study, 4-H state leaders were represented almost equally by both genders (56.5% female; 43.5% male). They were primarily in middle-age (87.3% > 43), they were almost exclusively heterosexual (98%), and they were predominantly white (83%).
Most leaders were married (72.3%), and they were highly experienced in their positions as state leaders (44.7% had been in their positions > 7 years). They came from diverse upbringings including rural, non-farm settings; small towns; suburbia; and urban environments, but more grew up on farms (40.4%) than in any other setting. The majority held doctorate degrees (57%) and had participated in diversity training in the last year (61.7%).

Recommendations

None of the 4-H leaders identified themselves as lesbian or gay on the questionnaire. Gay or lesbian leaders may have skipped the question on sexual orientation because they considered it sensitive and did not trust the researcher’s promise of anonymity, they may have opted out of the questionnaire altogether, or there are no lesbian or gay 4-H leaders. Ideally, the diversity of the population the organization wishes to serve would be reflected in the organization’s leadership. Extension does encourage racial and ethnic minorities to apply, but it is not clear that the invitation extends to sexual minorities (Lechman, 2005). Language on job applications that specifically invites sexual minorities to apply would be helpful. Given the lack of sexual diversity in 4-H leadership right now, sexual minorities may not see Extension as an organization that includes them, and thus may not choose to apply for jobs with Extension or participate in programs. A progressive 4-H diversity agenda would establish a goal related to the hiring of lesbian and gay 4-H leaders. It presupposes that leaders would be out in their organization, which is also a best practice. Given the lack of ethnic and racial diversity, the effort to recruit lesbian and gay leaders also should include an effort to increase the number of racial and ethnic minorities in 4-H leadership.
Implications to knowledge/theory

The researcher could find no study that described the demographic character of 4-H state leaders. The demographic information provided here begins to provide some characteristics of this leadership group. The majority of the respondents were middle-aged, highly educated, white professionals that had been in their positions for some time. The largest group grew up on farms.

Implications for further study

Little research is available that focuses on 4-H state leadership, yet 4-H state leaders play key roles in shaping 4-H state organizations and providing youth development programs for between six and seven million youths. Leaders represent the outreach efforts of land-grant research universities. Much more work is warranted to help understand this leadership group.

Question 2

How do 4-H state leaders score on a test measuring knowledge about sexual minorities compared to similar education professionals?

Major conclusions

Leaders were given a modified Sears knowledge test containing 17 true and false statements about lesbians and gays (Sears, 1992). The mean score was 61% correct ($\mu = 10.34$; $SD = 3.91$). Leaders scored similarly to pre-service teachers (53% correct) and teachers (65%).
Comparing leaders’ scores with scores from other studies was somewhat problematic. In the two studies cited, the Sears test was modified to make it relevant to target populations. Thus each study used a slightly different test. Also, almost a decade has passed since the cited studies were conducted. Substantial information regarding lesbians and gays has appeared in the popular press in the last ten years, as well as in the youth development literature. We might expect current educational professionals to score substantially better than they did a decade ago; 4-H leaders did not. Although comparisons with other studies are problematic, leaders’ responses to specific questions provide important insights into leaders’ knowledge of lesbians and gays.

For example, most 4-H leaders (77%) knew that homosexual males are not more likely to seduce young men than heterosexual males are likely to seduce young girls. This is an important fact for leaders to know since the organization puts volunteer adults together with young people. Knowledgeable leaders can respond to unwarranted fears inside and outside the organization that gay men will prey upon youth under their charge. The majority also knew (70%) that lesbian and gay youth are at much greater risk for suicide, depression, and substance abuse. Given this knowledge 4-H leaders can support the practice of proactively addressing homophobia and prejudice, as the best practices recommend.

On the other hand, almost a third (31.3%) of leaders were not sure whether or not homosexuals could be converted into heterosexuals. For an organization focused on youth development, this lack of accurate information is problematic. Adult leaders might support policies or interventions that attempt to encourage heterosexuality or dissuade homosexuality, if they mistakenly believe a person’s sexual orientation is malleable.
Only half (51.1%) knew that homosexuals did not choose their orientation, and less than half (43.8%) answered correctly that sexual orientation is established at an early age. Again, for youth development specialists, this misinformation is problematic. Leaders who falsely believe that sexual orientation is a choice and is not established early in life, might support efforts to dissuade youth from “adopting” a homosexual lifestyle. Leaders may also be less likely to support policies that encourage lesbian and gay 4-H professionals to be out, that encourage lesbian and gay youth to take pride in their orientation, and that encourage straight youth to support their lesbian and gay peers (Advocates for Youth, 2002).

A quarter (25%) of state leaders did not know whether or not psychiatrists considered homosexuality to be an illness, and 10% thought it was an illness; this despite the American Psychiatric Association declassifying it as an illness in 1973 (American Psychiatric Association, n.d.). Cooperative Extension prides itself on practices based on scientific evidence. There is clearly a need to bring science to state leaders’ knowledge regarding lesbian and gay youth development.

Only half (51.1%) of state leaders recognized as a myth the statement that a majority of homosexuals were seduced in adolescence by a homosexual who was several years older than them. Again, for program leaders who are in the position of bringing together adults and youth, harboring this myth sustains unwarranted suspicion regarding lesbian and gay professionals and volunteers working with youth.

Recommendations

Leaders reported a substantial amount of misinformation regarding lesbians and gays. An initiative is needed to bring accurate, research-based knowledge regarding
lesbians and gays to the leadership of 4-H. Although sexual orientation has been shown to be a sensitive and challenging topic in Cooperative Extension and 4-H, promoting a research-based workshop should not be difficult, since Cooperative Extension is a learning organization that prides itself on continually acquiring new knowledge. Scientific information regarding lesbians and gays is needed at the 4-H leadership level, but 4-H audiences should also be the beneficiaries of factual information regarding lesbians and gays.

Currently, leaders score 61% correct on a knowledge test of lesbians and gays. In order to be seen as exemplary on diversity issues and be able to provide citizens with accurate, up-to-date information, Extension might set as a goal that leaders, professionals, and volunteers score very high marks on a knowledge test of sexual minorities. Acquiring and disseminating scientific information to make citizens’ lives better is the mission of Extension. Extension cannot succeed in its goal if it does not encourage practitioners’ acquisition of scientific knowledge regarding its diverse constituents.

Implications to knowledge/theory

All youth serving organizations address sexual orientation in some fashion (whether they ignore sexual orientation, discriminate against lesbians and gays, passively accept them, or become advocates for them). This study begins to provide insight into the leadership of the largest non formal youth development organization in the United States. We learn that leaders achieve a range of scores on a test measuring knowledge of lesbians and gays. Scores on individual questions tell us that a substantial number of leaders have incorrect information that could slow the support of lesbians and gays in 4-H and compromise the diversity mission of the organization.
Implications for further study

This study looks at state leader knowledge, but the 4-H organization and the experience of lesbian and gay youth in 4-H is influenced by many other constituents including: the 4-H professionals who share scientific knowledge with county educators and the public, educators who work directly with volunteers, volunteers working directly with youth, county governments that help support 4-H, state legislators who support Cooperative Extension, parents, philanthropic individuals and organizations that contribute to 4-H, and the Federal USDA which implements federal policy. In order to completely understand why 4-H practices do or don’t support lesbian and gay youth, and what the organization can do to fully implement best practices, all constituents’ voices need to be considered.

Additionally, it is important to know how other youth development organizations address sexual orientation and how other organizations provide professional development around lesbian and gay issues. How do other youth development organizations navigate the challenges and rewards for addressing sexual minority youth audiences?

Question 3

How do state leaders score on a scale measuring modern homophobia (homonegativity) toward lesbians and gays compared to similar education professionals?

Major conclusions

State 4-H leaders were given an attitude instrument, called the Modern Homonegativity Scale (MHS), which was designed to measure contemporary homophobic attitudes (called homonegativity) (Morrison & Morrison, 2002). The scale was validated with Canadian college students. Leaders scored substantially below the 36
midpoint ($\mu = 30.8$, $SD = 8.37$) in a combined lesbian and gay scale. Fifty-five percent of state leaders scored below the mean. Leaders scored below all Canadian college students’ scores: male scores on the gay scale ($\mu = 41.9$, $SD = 9.1$), male scores on the lesbian scale ($\mu = 42.8$, $SD = 9.7$), female scores on the gay scale ($\mu = 37.3$, $SD = 10.1$), female scores on the lesbian scale ($\mu = 38.8$, $SD = 8.5$). The MHS scores resembled a normal curve, and, unlike scales developed earlier, there appeared to be no ceiling effect. The study also provides a new population’s MHS scores—4-H state leader scores.

**Recommendations**

While MHS scores were below the midpoint, some leaders still exhibited a substantial amount of homophobia. 4-H state leaders who manage youth development organizations and represent the land-grant universities have significant work to do to develop attitudes and actions that are informed by science and represent the most current information available.

**Implications for further study**

Professionals, educators, volunteers, and youths’ attitude scores are also important indicators of 4-H’s climate for lesbian and gay youth and should be measured. As more populations complete the MHS, the meaning of state 4-H leaders’ scores will become clearer. For now, in order to be seen as an exemplary youth development organization, 4-H leaders, professionals, educators, volunteers, and the youth themselves, should acquire the knowledge and experiences—including prejudice reduction work—that will enable them to score low on a homophobia scale.
Question 4

To what extent does 4-H implement best practices for a sexual minority youth audience?

Major conclusions

Eight best practices for supporting lesbian and gay youth in formal and non-formal educational settings were drawn from the literature. Leaders were asked whether or not the best practices had been implemented in their 4-H state organizations.

4-H leaders scored a little below the 4.0 midpoint ($\mu = 3.79$, $SD = 2.03$), indicating they had implemented, on average, about half of the suggested best practices. Some best practices had been implemented by almost all the respondents, and others were rarely implemented. For example, virtually all leaders (90%) reported their organization had a visible nondiscrimination youth policy that protected lesbian and gay youth. A majority (64%) reported they knew their Extension Director supported competency in sexual minority issues, none (0%) checked that their director did not support competency, and 36% did not know whether or not their director supported competency. Only a third (31%), though, had received training on lesbian and gay youth issues, and only a quarter (26%) had allies (heterosexuals who are highly competent regarding lesbian and gay issues and welcome interaction with sexual minority youth) in their organizations that were visible to youth.

Recommendations

According to the vast majority of 4-H leaders (90%), anti-discrimination policy protecting lesbians and gays exists in 4-H state organizations. From the knowledge test we learned that many leaders do not have factual information regarding lesbians and
gays. We can conclude that these 4-H leaders are charged with the protection of a population some know little about. As a research-based, learning organization, 4-H is primed to strengthen its knowledge regarding lesbians and gays, and make policy protecting lesbians and gays more meaningful.

Only 31% of 4-H state leaders indicated that 4-H professionals had received training on lesbian and gay issues. Additional training could increase knowledge of the issues, address prejudice and homophobia, and suggest best practices. In environments where a narrow focus on lesbian and gay youth may not be well received, training could be focused on prejudice reduction in general.

Thirty-two percent of leaders marked that they did not have a complaint procedure for addressing harassment or bullying that included sexual orientation. Policy is important, but without a complaint procedure that is widely known, there is no method for those who are harmed to seek redress. There is an opportunity for state leaders to develop procedures that tell both the straight and gay populations that there is a fair process for addressing complaints. Designating someone a complaints officer and publishing that person’s contact information is also helpful (American Civil Liberties Union, 2002). It sends a message to everyone that the organization takes harassment and bullying seriously.

Forty-six percent of leaders said volunteers had not received training addressing inappropriate language and slurs based on sexual orientation. Another 19% did not know if their volunteers had received training or not. Addressing inappropriate language requires skill, and training is needed to be successful. When inappropriate language is not addressed, an intimidating environment may develop that feels unsafe for all but the
bullies (California Safe Schools Coalition, 2005; Markow & Fein, 2005; Advocates for Youth, 2002).

Twenty-six percent of leaders reported that at least one of their heterosexual professionals visibly supports sexual minorities. Straight allies who are not direct beneficiaries of protections for lesbians and gays may be the most neutral and, thus, effective advocates for lesbian and gay youth. A national Safe Space program provides training on creating safe zones within organizations for lesbian and gay youth (Gay, Lesbian and Straight Education Network, 2003). Straight allies who have undergone training are able to designate their workspace (using a pink triangle, rainbow flag, or other signal) as a safe and welcoming place for lesbians and gays. Adults who have undergone Safe Space training also can help colleagues increase their competence in working with lesbian and gay youth, and reduce homophobia.

Forty-one percent of leaders said their 4-H materials had been reviewed for lesbian and gay stereotyping and bias. Agencies supporting lesbian and gay youth recommend as a best practice the review of curriculum and other educational materials (California Safe Schools Coalition, 2005; Markow & Fein, 2005; Advocates for Youth, 2002). With 59% reporting that their 4-H material had not been reviewed for bias and stereotyping, an opportunity exists to review materials. Where communities may be resistant to address a gay youth audience, the review can be broad and include racial stereotyping and gender role stereotyping.

Fifty-four percent of leaders reported they did not have a state Extension diversity specialist. Twenty-eight percent reported their diversity specialist had provided training or technical assistance on sexual minority issues. 4-H organizations may be lacking the
staffing or the will to systematically address diversity in their workforce and in their audiences.

*Implications to knowledge/theory*

Organizations that serve lesbian and gay youth regularly make recommendations regarding best practices to make youth feel safe. This research provides a best practice checklist that was developed by citing numerous expert organizations’ recommendations, and may be helpful for educational or youth development organizations who wish to work successfully with lesbian and gay youth. By implementing measures from the checklist, 4-H will provide lesbian and gay youth with a safe environment for their development. Implementing best practice measures will also positively impact the safety of all youth in 4-H. Implementing the eight best practices that were the focus of this study is a worthwhile goal for all state 4-H organizations.

*Implications for further study*

Much more research needs to be done evaluating whether or not best practices do indeed make lesbian and gay youths’ lives better. The list of eight best practices is supported by the literature, but many of the practices have not yet been rigorously evaluated to determine whether or not they are effective. Additionally, it is not yet clear which practices matter the most, although there is some evidence that establishing a gay-straight alliance club in schools is the most effective intervention for changing students’ attitudes toward lesbians and gays (Szalacha, 2003). The research on evaluating the impact of best practices, creating a safe school climate, and addressing homophobia is still in its infancy (Varjas, K. et als. 2008; Horowitz, A. & Hansen, A., 2006; Walton, G., 2004).
**Question 5**

*Do state leader demographics predict high, medium, or low knowledge, homophobia, or best practice implementation scores?*

**Major conclusions**

*Demographics X Knowledge*

There was a medium association (.309) between political identity and knowledge, with leaders identified as liberal scoring higher than those identified as conservative. There was a medium (.320) association between region and knowledge, with leaders from the North Central and Northeast Region scoring higher on the knowledge test than leaders from the Southern and Western Region. There was a medium association (.341) between highest degree and knowledge, with a greater proportion of leaders with doctorate degrees scoring in the high knowledge group and the greatest proportions of leaders with master’s degrees scoring in the medium knowledge group. In summary, liberal 4-H leaders, leaders from the North Central and Northeast regions, and leaders with Doctorate degrees all were associated with high knowledge scores.

*Demographics X Homophobia (homonegativity).*

There was a large association (.493) between upbringing and homophobia. Non-rural leaders had lower homophobia scores than rural leaders. There was a large association (.543) between political identity and homophobia. Leaders that were labeled liberal had lower homophobia scores than leaders that were labeled conservative. In summary, non-rural and liberal 4-H leaders had lower scores on the homophobia scale (lower homonegativity) than leaders with rural upbringings and conservative political identities.
Demographics X Best Practice.

There was a medium association (0.367) between gender and best practices. Women were evenly divided among the low, medium, and high best practices group, while the majority of men were in the middle best practice group. There was a medium association (0.385) between leaders who had attended diversity training in the last year and best practices, suggesting leaders who had been to training were much more likely to be in the high best practices group than leaders who had not been to training. There was a large association (0.476) between political identity and best practices, suggesting leaders who were coded liberal scored higher on the best practice inventory than leaders coded conservative. In summary, female leaders were distributed evenly across the three best practice groups (high, medium, and low best practices) while male leaders tended to be in the medium group, and leaders who attended diversity training and leaders who were liberal had higher best practice implementation scores than leaders who had not been to training and who were conservative.

Political identity was the only demographic variable that was associated with 4-H leader knowledge, attitude, and practices. Political identity had a medium association with knowledge and a large association with homonegativity and best practices. Conservative was associated with low knowledge, high homophobia, and low best practice implementation.

Large associations existed between political identity and homophobia, upbringing and homophobia, and political identity and best practice. They were 0.543, 0.493, and 0.476, respectively. Again conservative had a large association with high homophobia, non-rural upbringing had a large association with low homophobia, and conservative had a
large association with low best practices. In summary, demographics do have associations with high and low scores on knowledge, attitudes (homophobia), and practices.

Recommendations

Political identity was one of the most salient variables in this study. Conservative was associated with low knowledge, high homophobia, and low best practice implementation. The politically conservative have adopted as part of their political platform the denial of lesbian and gays’ right. Members of the conservative press regularly warn their audience that the sanctity of the family is under threat by lesbians and gays. It would be important to consciously challenge, both within the organization through staff development and training, and also in its programs, the negative myths propagated by the political conservatives regarding lesbians and gays. To be true to the mission of Extension and 4-H, state organizations must deliver objective information that is without political bias (APLU – Extension Committee, 2002).

Implications to knowledge/theory

In this study, demographics were associated with knowledge, homophobia, and best practice implementation. Rural upbringing and political affiliation had the largest associations. Gender, region, education, and attending diversity training had medium associations. The study describes a very small population--4-H state leaders--and cannot be generalized to other populations. Still, we learn that 4-H state leaders are like other populations in that their demographics predict knowledge of gays and lesbians and homophobia just like other populations’ demographics predict knowledge and homophobia.
The researcher did not find other studies that looked at the impact of diversity training on knowledge, homophobia, and best practice implementation. In this study, training was associated with best practice implementation.

*Implications for further study*

It is possible that a demographic variable that was not researched in this study explains the most variance among leaders’ knowledge, attitude, or best practices scores. Through qualitative interviews or focus groups a variable might surface that could be further researched using quantitative measures. For example, interviewing 4-H state leaders might reveal a demographic variable that explains why they have or have not adopted best practices for supporting lesbian and gay youth.

*Question 6*

*Is the extent of best practice implementation correlated with 4-H state leader knowledge scores, attitude (homophobia) scores, demographic information, or state policy?*

*Major conclusions*

Best practice implementation had a small correlation ($\rho = .174$) with knowledge and a small negative correlation ($\rho = -.162$) with homophobia. Best practice implementation was associated with the demographics gender, diversity training, and political identity. There was a medium association (.367) between gender and best practices. Women were evenly divided among the low, medium, and high best practices group, while the majority of men were in the middle best practices group. There was a medium association (.385) between leaders who had attended diversity training in the last year and best practices. Leaders who had been to training were much more likely to be in
the high best practices group than leaders who had not been to training. There was a large association (.476) between political identity and best practices. Leaders coded liberal scored higher on the best practices inventory than leaders coded conservative. In summary, women were spread evenly across the three best practices implementation groups, while men were concentrated in the middle group; leaders who had been to training implemented more best practices than those who had not; and conservative leaders implemented fewer best practices than liberal leaders.

No conclusions can be drawn about the impact of state policy. Virtually all 4-H leaders reported they had visible nondiscrimination policies that protected lesbians and gays. To protect anonymity, no attempt was made to link a leader’s responses to a particular state’s policy.

Recommendations

Knowledge and best practice implementation have an association. We would expect an increase in state leader knowledge to lead to an increase in the implementation of best practices. Homophobia (homonegativity) and best practice implementation have a negative relationship, and we would expect a reduction in homophobia to lead to an increase in best practice implementation. A leadership training that increases knowledge and reduces homophobia will very likely increase the implementation of best practices for lesbian and gay youth.

The research on best practices for supporting lesbian and gay youth is still emerging. We have catalogued a number of recommendations drawn from youth serving organizations. To the degree that 4-H state organizations can implement the recommendations, their youth development efforts are moving in a positive direction.
Implications for further study

This study asked 4-H leaders whether best practices had been implemented within their state organizations. The study is based on leaders’ self-reporting on their organizations’ practices. There was room for error. Additional research might find a more objective means for determining whether or not organizations had implemented best practices. For example, while leaders may feel non-discrimination policies that mention sexual orientation are highly visible, volunteers, youth, and parents may find them harder to find.

On October 2008, the researcher visited 50 states and five territories’ 4-H websites and attempted to locate a nondiscrimination statement that included sexual orientation. The researcher clicked on pages in the following order to create a method for measuring the degree of visibility of nondiscrimination statements: the 4-H home page (one click; highly visible), 4-H materials linked to the home page (two clicks; somewhat visible), the state Cooperative Extension home page (three clicks; neutral), the college or university home page (four clicks; somewhat hidden), or USDA material linked to 4-H (five clicks; very hidden). The following states had non-discrimination statements mentioning sexual orientation that appeared on state 4-H home pages: District of Columbia, New Jersey, South Carolina, and Vermont. Most states had statements that included the protection of sexual orientation on 4-H materials linked to the state 4-H home page. Web pages are being continually updated and the investigation was considered a status study with a short shelf life. A visible nondiscrimination statement that includes sexual orientation is warranted on 4-H state home pages, such as those listed above.
Outcome data for diversity training has not been systematically collected (Broadwater & Travis, 2003). We know training is associated with best practice implementation, but we do not know whether training leads to implementation or whether implementers attend training. Training on lesbians and gays needs to be evaluated. We also know that knowledge and attitudes are highly correlated. It may be that training which addresses knowledge and attitudes will have a synergistic effect, and best practices implementation will improve dramatically.

**Question 7**

*What are the correlates of high knowledge/low homophobia for 4-H leaders?*

**Major conclusions**

The associations for high knowledge scores are liberal state leaders (.309), North Central and Northeast Region (.320), and highest degree (.341). The associations for low homophobia (homonegative) scores are non-rural upbringing (.493) and liberal political identity (.543). Liberal political identity is the only variable associated with both high knowledge and low homophobia.

**Recommendations**

Leaders who identified themselves as conservative, from the Western and Southern Regions, having Master ’s degrees, and with a rural upbringing might be prioritized for diversity training. It is important to note, though, that the study represents the responses of 64% of a population---individuals who self-reported that they were 4-H state program leaders. The responses were not from a random sample, and we cannot generalize to all 4-H state organizations, or even to 4-H regions. Participation rates were highest among the Western (73%) and North Central (69%) Regions and lowest among
the Northeast (61%) and Southern Regions (57%). We know least about the Northeast and Southern regions because of lower response rates.

Conservative political affiliation was associated with low knowledge and high homophobia. Training content might address myths or false beliefs propagated by a conservative political establishment. 4-H professionals, educators, and volunteers might also be prioritized for diversity training, although this study does not address the characteristics of these groups.

*Implications to knowledge/theory*

The large, negative correlation between knowledge and attitude ($\rho = -0.498$) provides further evidence that these variables have an inverse relationship. This study also supports other research that correlates specific demographics--rural upbringing, geographic region, conservative political affiliation--with homophobia (Paterson, 2004; Morrison, 2003; Morrison & Morrison, 2002; Herek, 2000; Gorsuch & McFarland, 1972).

**Question 8**

_Do correlates of homophobia cited in the literature hold true for 4-H state leaders?_

*Major conclusions*

The literature cited gender, age, religiosity, political identity, having a gay friend or family member, growing up in a rural environment, and years of education as correlates of homophobia (Paterson, 2004; Morrison, 2003; Morrison & Morrison, 2002; Herek, 2000; Gorsuch & McFarland, 1972). In this study of 4-H state leaders, gender, age, religiosity, having a gay friend or family member, and years of education were all
independent of homophobia, while there was a large association between rural environment (.493) and homophobia, and political identity (.543) and homophobia.

Non-rural leaders had lower homophobia scores than rural leaders and leaders identified as liberal had lower homophobia scores than those identified as conservative. In summary, growing up in a rural environment and conservative political affiliation were confirmed as correlates of homophobia by this study; gender, age, having a good friend or family member who was gay, religiosity, and education were independent of homophobia in this study.

Implications to knowledge/theory

This study corroborates previous research that found rural upbringing and conservative political affiliation to be correlates of homophobia. The study suggests that 4-H state leaders differ from other populations in that being male, being older, not having a gay friend or family member, being very religious, and having a Master’s degree rather than a Doctorate are not necessarily associated with increased homophobia (Paterson, 2004; Morrison, 2003; Morrison & Morrison, 2002; Herek, 2000; Gorsuch & McFarland, 1972).

Implications for further study

For the 4-H population studied, the variable years of education had very little variance since all leaders held Masters or Doctorate degrees. Consequently there were no differences in attitude based on years of education for this population. A population with more diversity in education needs to be studied to further consider this demographic as a correlate of homophobia.
Almost eighty percent (78.7%) of state leaders had good friends or family members that were lesbian or gay. Again, there was very little variance possible and the association between good friends or family members and homophobia remained small to medium (Φ = .285). A population with more diversity in friends and family members that are gay needs to be studied to further consider this demographic as a correlate of homophobia. Both years of education and best friend or family member warrant closer investigation with a more diverse population.

Question 9

Are lesbians and gays visible in state 4-H organizations, can lesbians and gays be open regarding their orientation, and does their visibility and openness correlate with 4-H leaders’ knowledge, homonegativity, and best practice implementation?

Major conclusions

Most of the leaders (64%) knew someone in their organization (professional, volunteer, or youth) who was lesbian or gay, and all leaders recognized they had or might have lesbian or gay youth in their 4-H programs. Twenty-six leaders (55.3%) knew a lesbian or gay professional in their organization, and twenty (42.6%) of the leaders had lesbian or gay 4-H professionals in their organization who publicly acknowledged their sexual orientation to colleagues. That left six leaders who knew a lesbian or gay professional in 4-H, but who did not know a lesbian or gay professional in their organization who publicly acknowledged their orientation. Thus, in six 4-H organizations, lesbian and gay professionals did not publicly acknowledge their sexual orientation. Additionally, leaders knew very few professionals (8.5%) or volunteers who (6.4%) publicly acknowledge their sexual orientation to 4-H youth.
In summary, lesbians and gays are visible to 4-H leaders in roughly three-fifths of 4-H organizations, about 13% of leaders knew gay professionals who were not out to colleagues, and virtually all lesbian and gay professional and volunteers were not out to youth.

**Recommendations**

Where there are visible lesbian and gay adult role models, lesbian and gay youth can see a positive future for themselves (Sadowski, Chow, & Scanlon, 2009). Lesbian and gay adults who publicly acknowledge their sexual orientation demonstrate to colleagues and youth that sexual identity is a fact of life and not something that needs to be hidden or is shameful. Nondiscrimination policies protect lesbians and gays from discrimination in 4-H, but lesbians and gays may need the support of state leaders in their organizations to encourage them to publicly acknowledge their sexual orientation.

State leaders’ religiosity was not associated with heightened homophobia and cannot be considered a source of irresolvable conflict between church teachings and the rights of lesbians and gays. According to this study, conservative political affiliation will present the greatest challenge to 4-H leaders’ acceptance of lesbians and gays. But given the mission of Extension, to deal in university supported research that is free from political bias, and given its time-tested expertise in changing attitudes so that they are aligned with science, 4-H is well suited to address politically conservative views that are associated with homophobia.

4-H leaders can support the recruitment of sexual minority professionals, educators, and volunteers. When leaders hire sexual minority professionals and
encourage them to disclose their sexual orientation in the workplace, they implement science-based best practices (Advocates for Youth, 2002).

Implications for further study

Further study needs to be conducted to better understand why so few professionals and volunteers publicly acknowledge their sexual orientation to youth. Cooperative Extension has a strong anti-discrimination policy that protects lesbians and gays. According to 4-H leaders, Cooperative Extension Directors either support competency (64%) in sexual minority issues or their views are unknown (36%); no leader reported that their Cooperative Extension director did not support sexual minority competency. Why then are so few professionals and volunteers out to youth? An investigation that looked in greater detail at the lives of lesbian and gay professionals, educators, and volunteers in 4-H would increase our understanding of this issue. A study of lesbian and gay 4-H alumni—who might be able to talk freely and openly about their past experience in 4-H—might also help explain why volunteers and professionals do not publicly acknowledge their orientation to youth.

Little work has been done on visible lesbian and gay adults’ affect on sexual minority youth. Even in lesbian and gay youth serving organizations, there is relatively little discussion regarding the importance of visible lesbian and gay adults in the lives of youth, including the lives of straight youth (California Safe Schools Coalition, 2005; Markow & Fein, 2005; Advocates for Youth, 2002).
Summary and Comments

Below are the study’s highlights along with the researcher’s comments.

- 64% of the addressees on a national list of 4-H state leaders responded to a questionnaire on leaders’ knowledge, attitudes, and best practice regarding lesbians and gays. The results are only representative of those who participated.

- The majority of respondents were middle-aged, highly educated, white professionals that had been in their positions for some time. The largest group grew up on farms. As Extension expands its audience to include more diverse populations, it will also be challenged to diversify its workforce, especially with regard to racial and sexual diversity.

- Leaders’ mean scores on a gay and lesbian knowledge test were above the midpoint. Consistently low correct scores on specific questions were troubling, since leaders’ lack of knowledge could lead to practices that do not support sexual minority youth development. For example, leaders who did not know that sexual orientation is established at an early age might be reluctant to validate 4-H youth who identify as lesbian or gay.

- Leaders’ scores on a modern homophobia scale were normally distributed. There is a significant opportunity to decrease homophobia among 4-H state leaders through training.

- Leaders’ scores on a best practices checklist were normally distributed. Leaders almost unanimously reported that anti-discrimination polices that protect lesbians and gays were highly visible in their organizations, and almost all leaders
recognized that youth who identified as lesbian or gay were harassed in school.

Approximately one third of the leaders reported that 4-H professionals in their organization receive training on lesbian and gay issues.

- Leaders who were coded liberal, leaders from North Central and Northeast regions, and leaders with Doctorate degrees were more likely to score high on a knowledge test than other leaders. Participation rates in the southern region were the lowest of the four groups, and we know the least about them.

- Leaders with rural upbringings and leaders who were politically conservative were more likely to score high on a homophobia scale (more homophobic) than other leaders.

- Leaders who had been to training in the last year and leaders who were coded liberal were more likely to score high on a best practice implementation checklist. We do not know whether attending training increases best practice implementation, or whether 4-H leaders from states that had implemented best practices were more likely to attend training.

- Political affiliation was the only demographic variable associated with all three measures surveyed: knowledge, attitudes, and best practices. Conservative leaders were associated with low knowledge, high homophobia, and low best practices implementation. Through training, the politically conservative culture’s inaccurate claims about sexual orientation will need to be addressed.

- There were three large associations found in the study: between political identity and homophobia, upbringing and homophobia, and political identity and best practices.
Leaders’ knowledge scores and homophobia scores had a large, negative correlation. The association between knowledge and homophobia is one of this study’s most important finding. It is the mission of Cooperative Extension to challenge strongly held, inaccurate beliefs with science-based knowledge, and thereby change attitudes and behaviors. With an increase in leaders’ knowledge of gay and lesbians, we can expect a decrease in homophobic attitudes and an increase in the implementation of best practices to support lesbian and gay youth. It is within the mission of 4-H to promote scientific knowledge regarding lesbians and gays that will change attitudes, reduce homophobia, and increase the implementation of best practices.

Contrary to the literature on homophobia, for 4-H state leaders, gender, age, knowing a gay friend or family member, education, and religiosity were not associated with homophobia. Often the denial of rights for lesbians and gays is argued on religious grounds. In this survey, leaders who described themselves as very religious were not necessarily homophobic.

Roughly three-fifths of leaders knew someone in their organization who was gay. All leaders recognized they either did have or could have lesbian or gay youth in their 4-H programs. The topic of lesbian and gay adults and youth in 4-H is thus relevant to 4-H state leaders. A little less than half of the respondents knew someone in their organization who publicly acknowledged their sexual orientation. Very few 4-H professionals and volunteer were out to youth. An opportunity exists to encourage lesbian and gay adults in 4-H to publicly acknowledge their sexual orientation with colleagues and youth.
This study gathered data on 4-H state leaders to determine how well they supported lesbians and gays. We learn that 4-H state leader scores are normally distributed on questions that measured knowledge, attitudes, and practices. A few perform poorly, many are in the middle, and a few perform exceptionally well in the areas measured. We still know little about the degree to which leaders’ can influence their state organizations, and we have little information from lesbians and gays, themselves, on how well states perform on these issues. Much more research is warranted to understand what the 4-H experience is like for the workforce and for lesbian and gay youth.

Greater effort also is needed to attract lesbians and gays into the 4-H workforce and to encourage the ones already there to share their sexual orientation with colleagues and youth. More work needs to be done to draw more sexual minority youth into 4-H, and to ensure the lesbian and gay youth already in 4-H are adequately supported. Any work on behalf of lesbian and gay youth also benefits heterosexual youth, since the goal is to create in 4-H a climate of acceptance and respect for all differences.
REFERENCES


Lechman, K. (2005). *Sexual orientation as an element of diversity: Authentic efforts toward inclusive practices or don’t ask, don’t tell, don’t be recognized?* Retrieved from http://www.extension.org/pages/Sexual_Orientation_as_an_Element_of_Diversity:_Authentic_Efforts_Toward_Inclusive_Practices_or_Don%E2%80%99t_Ask%2C_Don%E2%80%99t_Tell%2C_Don%E2%80%99t_be_Recognized%3F


National 4-H Council (n. d.). Retrieved on October 24, 2009 from the National 4-H Council http://www.fourhcouncil.edu/


4-H Leadership and Sexual Minority Youth

1. Fourteen questions on your 4-H state organization.

Please click on the button that best matches your response to the statement.

1. Do you know anyone in your 4-H organization that is lesbian or gay? (Please mark all that apply.)
   - [ ] Yes, a 4-H professional (faculty, agent, specialist, administrator, Extension Associate, etc.).
   - [ ] Yes, a 4-H volunteer.
   - [ ] Yes, a 4-H youth.
   - [ ] No.
   - [ ] Not sure.

2. We have lesbian or gay 4-H professionals or volunteers who are "out" (publicly acknowledge their sexual orientation) to colleagues.
   - [ ] Yes.
   - [ ] No.
   - [ ] I don't know.

3. We have lesbian or gay 4-H professionals who are out to 4-H youth.
   - [ ] Yes.
   - [ ] No.
   - [ ] I don't know.

4. We have lesbian or gay 4-H volunteers who are out to 4-H youth.
   - [ ] Yes.
   - [ ] No.
   - [ ] I don't know.
5. We have lesbian or gay youth in our 4-H programs.
   ○ Yes.
   ○ No.
   ○ I don't know.

6. Our 4-H professionals receive training on lesbian and gay youth issues.
   ○ Yes.
   ○ No.
   ○ I don't know.

7. In our 4-H clubs, we have a complaint procedure for harassment or bullying that includes sexual orientation.
   ○ Yes.
   ○ No.
   ○ I don't know.

8. Our 4-H volunteers have received training in addressing inappropriate language and slurs based on sexual orientation.
   ○ Yes.
   ○ No.
   ○ I don't know.

9. At least one of our 'straight' state 4-H professionals visibly supports sexual minorities (safe zone sticker, rainbow flag, advocacy, etc.)
   ○ Yes.
   ○ No.
   ○ I don't know.

10. Policies that prohibit discrimination based on sexual orientation are visible in our 4-H organization (web site, brochures, posters, curriculum, etc.).
    ○ Yes.
    ○ No.
    ○ I don't know.
11. Our 4-H materials have been reviewed for bias and lesbian and gay stereotyping.
   - Yes.
   - No.
   - I don't know.

12. Our organization makes referrals to lesbian or gay organization(s).
   - Yes.
   - No.
   - I don't know.

13. My Extension Director supports competency in sexual minority issues.
   - Yes.
   - No.
   - I don't know.

14. My state Extension organization's diversity specialist has provided training or technical assistance on sexual minority issues.
   - Yes.
   - No.
   - I don't know.
   - We do not have a diversity specialist.

   25%
4-H Leadership and Sexual Minority Youth

2. Seventeen statements about lesbians, gays, and bisexuals.

Please click on the button that best matches your response to the statement.

1. Children who engage in homosexual behaviors will become homosexual adults.
   ○ True.
   ○ False.
   ○ I don't know.

2. There is a good chance of changing homosexual people into heterosexuals.
   ○ True.
   ○ False.
   ○ I don't know.

3. Most homosexuals want to be members of the opposite sex.
   ○ True.
   ○ False.
   ○ I don't know.

4. Some church denominations oppose legal and social discrimination against homosexual men and women.
   ○ True.
   ○ False.
   ○ I don't know.

5. Sexual orientation is established at an early age.
   ○ True.
   ○ False.
6. Homosexual males are more likely to seduce young men than heterosexual males are likely to seduce young girls.
   - True.
   - False.
   - I don't know.

7. According to psychiatrists, homosexuality is an illness.
   - True.
   - False.
   - I don't know.

8. Gay men are more likely to be victims of violent crime than the general public.
   - True.
   - False.
   - I don't know.

9. A majority of homosexuals were seduced in adolescence by a person of the same sex, usually several years older.
   - True.
   - False.
   - I don't know.

10. A person becomes a homosexual because he/she chooses to do so.
    - True.
    - False.
    - I don't know.

11. Homosexual behavior does not occur among animals (other than human beings).
    - True.
    - False.
    - I don't know.
12. Many sex researchers consider sexual behavior as a continuum from exclusively homosexual to exclusively heterosexual.
   - True.
   - False.
   - I don't know.

13. Historically, almost every culture has evidenced widespread intolerance toward homosexuals, viewing them as 'sick' or as 'sinners.'
   - True.
   - False.
   - I don't know.

14. Heterosexual men tend to express more hostile attitudes toward homosexuals than do heterosexual women.
   - True.
   - False.
   - I don't know.

15. Bisexuality is characterized by sexual behaviors and/or responses to both sexes.
   - True.
   - False.
   - I don't know.

16. Lesbian and gay youth are at much greater risk for suicide, depression, and substance abuse.
   - True.
   - False.
   - I don't know.

17. Most high school students who identify as lesbian or gay report being harassed in school.
   - True.
   - False.
I don't know.
3. Twelve opinions expressed by Americans about lesbians and gays.

Please click on the number which best matches the extent to which you agree or disagree with the statement.

1. Many lesbians and gays use their sexual orientation so that they can obtain special privileges.

   1 - Strongly disagree  2 - Disagree  3 - Don't know  4 – Agree  5 - Strongly agree

2. Lesbians and gays seem to focus on the ways in which they differ from heterosexuals, and ignore the ways in which they are the same.

   1 - Strongly disagree  2 - Disagree  3 - Don't know  4 – Agree  5 - Strongly agree

3. Lesbians and gays do not have all the rights they need.

   1 - Strongly disagree  2 - Disagree  3 - Don't know  4 – Agree  5 - Strongly agree

4. The notion of universities providing students with undergraduate degrees in Gay and Lesbian Studies is ridiculous.

   1 - Strongly disagree  2 - Disagree  3 - Don't know  4 – Agree  5 - Strongly agree

5. Celebrations such as "Gay Pride Day" are ridiculous because they assume that an individual's sexual orientation should constitute a source of pride.

   1 - Strongly disagree  2 - Disagree  3 - Don't know  4 – Agree  5 - Strongly agree

6. Lesbians and gays still need to protest for equal rights.

   1 - Strongly disagree  2 - Disagree  3 - Don't know  4 – Agree  5 - Strongly agree
7. Lesbians and gays should stop shoving their lifestyle down other people's throats.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Don't know
- 4 - Agree
- 5 - Strongly agree

8. If lesbians and gays want to be treated like everyone else, then they need to stop making such a fuss about their sexuality/culture.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Don't know
- 4 - Agree
- 5 - Strongly agree

9. Lesbians and gays who are "out of the closet" should be admired for their courage.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Don't know
- 4 - Agree
- 5 - Strongly agree

10. In today's tough economic times, Americans' tax dollars shouldn't be used to support lesbian and gay organizations.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Don't know
- 4 - Agree
- 5 - Strongly agree

11. Lesbians and gays should stop complaining about the way they are treated in society, and simply get on with their lives.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Don't know
- 4 - Agree
- 5 - Strongly agree

12. Lesbians and gays have become far too confrontational in their demand for equal rights.

- 1 - Strongly disagree
- 2 - Disagree
- 3 - Don't know
- 4 - Agree
- 5 - Strongly agree

75%
4-H Leadership and Sexual Minority Youth

4. The last fifteen questions collect demographic information.

Please click on the button that best approximates your response.

1. What is your gender?
   - Female
   - Male
   - Other

2. What is your age?
   - 23 - 32
   - 33 - 42
   - 43 – 52
   - 53 - 62
   - 63 and above

3. What is your sexual identity?
   - Heterosexual
   - Bisexual
   - Gay
   - Lesbian
   - Transgender
   - Uncertain

4. With what racial/ethnic group do you identify? (You may mark all that apply.)
   - African American/Black
   - Asian/Pacific Islander
   - Middle Eastern
   - American Indian/Alaskan native/Hawaiian native
   - Chicano/Latino/Hispanic
   - White/Caucasian
5. What is your family status?
☐ Single
☐ Married
☐ In a committed relationship
☐ Separated, divorced, widowed
☐ Other

6. How long have you held your present position?
☐ Less than 1 year
☐ 1 - 3 years
☐ 4 - 6 years
☐ 7 - 10 years
☐ More than 10 years

7. In what environment did you grow up?
☐ Farm
☐ Rural, non farm
☐ Combination farm and non farm
☐ Small-town
☐ Suburban
☐ Urban
☐ International
☐ Other

8. I have good friends and/or family members who are lesbian or gay.
☐ Yes.
☐ No.
☐ I don't know.

9. By my own definition, I consider myself to be . . .
☐ 1 - Not at all religious.
☐ 2 - Slightly religious.
☐ 3 - Somewhat religious.
☐ 4 - Very religious.
☐ I don't know.

150
10. By my own definition, I consider myself to be politically . . .

- 1 - Very conservative.
- 2 - Conservative.
- 3 - Somewhat conservative.
- 4 - Somewhat liberal.
- 5 - Liberal.
- 6 - Very liberal.
- I don't know.

11. Have you participated in diversity training within the past year?

- Yes.
- No.

12. Does your Extension organization have a diversity specialist?

- Part time.
- Full time.
- I don't know.

13. In which Cooperative Extension region is your state located?

- North Central
- Northeast
- Southern
- Western

14. What is the highest degree you have received?

- Bachelor's
- Master's
- Doctorate

15. Is your institution participating in, or has it participated in, a Change Agent State for Diversity efforts?

- Yes.
- No.
- I don't know.

16. Comments?

Comments?
APPENDIX B: INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD APPROVAL
January 26, 2009

Protocol Number: 2008B0017
Protocol Title: 4-H AND SEXUAL MINORITY YOUTH - ASSESSING 4-H STATE LEADERS’ PRACTICES, KNOWLEDGE, AND ATTITUDES, Joseph Gliem, Jeff Soder, Humaa & Community Resource Development
Type of Review: Initial Review—Expedited
IRB Staff Contact: Jacob R. Stoddard
Phone: 614-392-0526
Email: stoddard.13@osu.edu

Dear Dr. Gliem,

The Behavioral IRB APPROVED BY EXPEDITED REVIEW the above referenced protocol. The Board was able to provide expedited approval under 45 CFR 46.110(b)(1) because the research presents minimal risk to subjects and qualifies under the expedited review category(s) listed below.

Date of IRB Approval: January 26, 2009
Date of IRB Approval Expiration: December 10, 2009
Expedited Review Category: 7

In addition, the protocol has been approved for a waiver of documentation of the consent process.

If applicable, informed consent (and HIPAA research authorization) must be obtained from subjects or their legally authorized representatives and documented prior to research involvement. The IRB-approved consent form and process must be used. Changes in the research (e.g., recruitment procedures, advertisements, enrollment numbers, etc.) or informed consent process must be approved by the IRB before they are implemented (except where necessary to eliminate apparent immediate hazards to subjects).

This approval is valid for one year from the date of IRB review when approval is granted or modifications are required. The approval will no longer be in effect on the date listed above as the IRB expiration date. A Continuing Review application must be approved within this interval to avoid expiration of IRB approval and cessation of all research activities. A final report must be provided to the IRB and all records relating to the research (including signed consent forms) must be retained and available for audit for at least 3 years after the research has ended.

It is the responsibility of the investigator to promptly report to the IRB any serious, unexpected and related adverse events or potential unanticipated problems involving risks to subjects or others.

This approval is issued under The Ohio State University’s OHRP Federally Assured #00006378. All forms and procedures can be found on the OERP website – www.orrp.osu.edu. Please feel free to contact the IRB staff contact listed above with any questions or concerns.

Shari R. Speen, PhD, Chair
Behavioral and Social Sciences Institutional Review Board

154
APPENDIX C: RECRUITMENT EMAILS – FIRST CONTACT
Dear _____________ (4-H State Leader name):

My name is Jeff Soder, and I am a doctoral candidate in Human & Community Resource Development at The Ohio State University. While a student at OSU, I have had the good fortune to work under Dr. Jeff King, past Ohio State 4-H Leader, and Dr. Ryan Schmiesing, past Co-State 4-H Leader, as a research associate in the state 4-H office.

This note is simply to let you know that I will be sending you an online questionnaire within the next few days, and I hope you will take approximately fifteen minutes to complete it.

I know that you are extremely busy, but your responses will be invaluable in helping to better understand 4-H leadership and diversity. My research is focused on Cooperative Extension’s interest in engaging diverse audiences through 4-H programs. Specifically, I’m interested in 4-H state leaders’ thoughts regarding gay and lesbian youth’s participation in 4-H.

In an effort to show my appreciation for your time, your name, along with 50 other state leaders’ names, will be entered into a drawing for a $100.00 gift certificate at Amazon.com.

Thank you in advance for your participation.

Thank you,
Jeff Soder
Doctoral Candidate, Human & Community Resource Development
College of Food, Agricultural and Environmental Sciences
The Ohio State University
soder.5@osu.edu
360-725-6059
APPENDIX D: RECRUITMENT EMAILS - SECOND CONTACT
Dear (State Leader name):

Thank you for participating in the survey by following the link below:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=BoCMbCZxSSMKtTlfxRWGjA_3d_3d

I am completing the research phase of my dissertation at The Ohio State University and my focus is on 4-H and state leadership. I’m asking you to assist me by completing a 41 item multiple-choice questionnaire, plus 14 questions related to demographics. My research is focused on Cooperative Extension’s interest in reaching diverse audiences. Specifically, I’m interested in 4-H state leaders’ thoughts regarding gay and lesbian youth and how they change over time. Your responses may help define future 4-H professional development and assist 4-H in bringing positive youth development to diverse populations.

I realize that questions about minorities are sensitive, and some may even find some items on the questionnaire offensive. I encourage you to respond honestly and, of course, skip any questions you do not wish to answer. The thoughts and opinions of state 4-H leaders on these matters are virtually unknown, and it may help the field significantly to acquire this information.

This is an anonymous survey and your email address and IP address will not be collected by SurveyMonkey. (Although every effort to protect confidentiality will be made, no guarantee of internet survey security can be given, as, although unlikely, transmissions can be intercepted and IP addresses can be identified.) All data collected will be aggregated and reported as regional data, in order to further protect the anonymity of participants. Survey results will only speak about the four 4-H regions, not individual states.

Thank you in advance for contributing to this research. In an effort to show my appreciation for your time, your name, along with fifty other state leaders’ names, has been entered into a drawing for a $100.00 gift certificate at Amazon.com. Please
complete the linked questionnaire by Friday March 10th. It will take only 15 minutes of your time.

If you are interested in receiving a copy of the research findings, please contact me at the address below and I will email you a copy. If you have questions about the survey, I can be reached at soder.5@osu.edu or (360) 725-6059. I welcome your feedback.

For questions about your rights as a participant in this study or to discuss other study-related concerns or complaints with someone who is not part of the research team, you may contact Ms. Sandra Meadows in the Office of Responsible Research Practices at 1-800-678-6251.

My committee members are Dr. Joe Gliem (Chair) and Dr. Scott Scheer, from The Human and Community Resource Development Department at The Ohio State University, and Dr. Nikki Conklin, recently retired from The Ohio State University Cooperative Extension. You can reach my Chair, Dr. Joe Gliem, at gliem.2@osu.edu.

Thank you,
Jeff Soder
Doctoral Candidate, Human & Community Resource Development,
The Ohio State University
Soder.5@osu.edu; 360-725-6059
APPENDIX E: RECRUITMENT EMAILS – THIRD CONTACT
Dear :

Please disregard this message if you have already completed or if you do not wish to participate in the online survey at the following link:
https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=BoCMbCZxSSMKtTIfxRWGjA_3d_3d

I am completing the research phase of my dissertation at The Ohio State University and my focus is on 4-H and state leadership. I’m asking you to assist me by completing a 41 item multiple-choice questionnaire, plus 14 questions related to demographics. My research is focused on Cooperative Extension’s interest in reaching diverse audiences. Specifically, I’m interested in 4-H state leaders’ thoughts regarding gay and lesbian youth and how they change over time. Your responses may help define future 4-H professional development and assist 4-H in bringing positive youth development to more diverse populations.

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Thank you,
Jeff Soder
Doctoral Candidate, Human & Community Resource Development,
The Ohio State University, Soder.5@osu.edu, 360-725-6059
Dear 4-H State Leader:

Thank you for participating in the online survey, “4H Leadership and Sexual Minority Youth.” Your responses provide valuable insight into the discussion around 4-H’s effort to be a pluralistic organization that welcomes diversity in its outreach efforts and programs.

As promised, your name was entered into a drawing for a $100.00 gift certificate at Amazon.com. The winner was Ms. Christy Bartley, from The Pennsylvania State University.

If you have not participated in the survey and would like to, the survey site will be open through March 15th. Again, it will take 15 minutes of your time. Please follow the link below.

https://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=BoCMbCZxSSMKtTIfxRWGjA_3d_3d

Thank you,

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