

## **Building Confidence and Personal Pride: Perceptions of Selected FFA Members Toward Involvement in the National FFA Organization**

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### **Abstract**

The purpose of this study was to determine perceptions of selected members of the National FFA Organization towards the members' *level* of FFA involvement and *benefits* from FFA involvement. To fulfill the purposes of the study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What activities did selected FFA members participate in that they perceived were most helpful in their development as a person?
2. What *level* of participation did selected FFA members perceive was most helpful in their development as a person?
3. Were there skills that were learned through FFA participation that selected FFA members were able to transfer to other settings in their life? If so, what were the skills, and what areas did they transfer to?
4. Does active participation in the National FFA Organization accomplish something in selected FFA members' lives that no other activity, group, or organization accomplishes?
5. What are the future plans of selected members of the National FFA Organization after they graduate from high school and/or conclude active participation in the FFA?

Qualitative research methods were used to conduct this study. Members of the National FFA Organization were randomly selected for interviewing at each of three events. The events included a week-long session at the 1999 Washington Leadership Conference for FFA members in Washington, D. C., the 1999 State President's Conference for State FFA Presidents, and the 1999 National FFA Convention in Louisville, Kentucky.

An interview guide was developed by the researchers and input was received from members of the National FFA staff. The interview guide contained questions used to explore the members' *level* of FFA involvement and *benefits* from FFA involvement.

When asked for the activities that were most helpful to their development, 62% of selected FFA members answered with leadership training and/or leadership opportunities. When asked what level of participation was most helpful in their development, the most common response, 34 percent, was that participation at the local level was the most helpful. Forty-two percent of the respondents in the study indicated they used leadership skills gained in the FFA in other school related activities. When selected students were asked if participation in the National FFA Organization did something for them that no other activity, group, or organization does, 32% of respondents indicated that the FFA helped them build confidence and personal pride. Finally, selected FFA members of this study were asked for their future plans. Eighty-nine percent indicated they planned to participate in some form of post-secondary education, and 65% of the members plan to become involved in an agricultural related career.

## Introduction/Theoretical Framework

The National FFA Organization is a national youth organization for students studying agricultural education in public secondary schools. It is an essential component of secondary agricultural education. Members of the National FFA Organization utilize hands-on learning to gain experiences in leadership training, career exploration, and citizenship development. The main tenets of the association are found in the organization's mission: FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education (Official FFA Manual, 1999). In 1999 alone almost one-half million secondary agricultural education students enjoyed official membership in the National FFA Organization.

Although admirable, this number represents roughly half of all students enrolled in agricultural education programs nationwide. Secondary agricultural education teachers have long perceived the benefits of membership in the National FFA Organization for their students. However, concern exists for the lack of perceived benefits of membership in the National FFA Organization for many of the students enrolled in agricultural education. Renewed discussions concerning the need for FFA and agricultural education have taken center stage in recent issues of the *Agricultural Education Magazine* where questions have been posed to clarify the need for public school agricultural education and the FFA in the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Many actively engaged in agricultural education can think of no other opportunities where students can receive the level of exposure to premier leadership, personal growth, and career success (National FFA Organization, 1999) that the FFA has to offer. However, total membership inconsistent with total students enrolled in agricultural education has confounded those closely associated with the National FFA Organization since the benefits of membership appear self-evident. Of an estimated 800,000 agriculture students today, only about 450,000 receive educational benefits as members of the FFA (Stagg & Staller, 1999).

Many members, advisors, parents, and supporters can extol the virtues of membership in the National FFA Organization. However, little information is available that looks at the beliefs and perceptions of the most active FFA members in the organization. Evidence exists that identifies factors influencing students to enroll in agricultural education courses. Marshall, Herring, and Briers (1992) found that students enrolled in agricultural education because of the class characteristics. Hoover and Scanlon (1991) determined that the image of agricultural education, the FFA, and the agriculture profession in general were the greatest barriers for students not enrolling in agricultural education.

Research can lead us to conclusions explaining why some agricultural education students join the National FFA Organization and others do not. Connors, Moore, and Elliot (1990) found that the most important factor influencing non-FFA members to join the organization was their interest in agriculture, while the barriers for agricultural education students not joining FFA included their level of interest in agriculture and the future value of the FFA to their career. And, Gliem and Gliem (1999) reported that class rank, year first enrolled in FFA, interest in agriculture, former family membership in FFA, teacher enthusiasm for FFA, and including FFA activities as part of the classroom instruction were significant predictors for whether a student would be an FFA member or non-member.

“Young people enjoy doing something worthwhile, excelling in their work and play, being appreciated, being in responsible positions, learning how to help themselves, having

opportunities to participate in activities, and obtaining recognition through outstanding service and achievement” (Phipps & Osborne, 1988, p. 371). Agricultural educators are encouraged to link FFA leadership activities, award programs and competitive events to high quality agricultural education curriculum (Guide to Local Program Success, 1998). Lockaby (1998) concluded that within the agricultural education model, the FFA is the most appropriate tool for teaching values and attitudes to agricultural education students. And, Keith (1998) revealed that the type of competition that youth organizations offer is beneficial to the student as well as their families. Finally, Turner and Herren (1997) compared FFA members with non-FFA members in agricultural education. They found that FFA members had a higher need for achievement, affiliation, and power when compared to agricultural education students who did not join the National FFA Organization.

Qualitative research methodology can be a useful tool as we witness change after change imposed upon the old paradigm of “vocational agriculture” and adapt to new expectations and market forces propelling agricultural education into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. Furthermore, qualitative research methodology can uncover intricate pieces of evidence that are difficult to obtain using quantitative methods. Denzin and Lincoln (1994) define qualitative research as “multi-method in its focus, involving an interpretive, naturalistic approach to its subject matter. This means that qualitative researchers study things in their natural settings, attempting to make sense of, or interpret, phenomena in terms of the meaning people bring them” (p. 2). It was with this approach in mind that the researchers set out to determine the beliefs and perceptions of certain FFA members towards participation in the National FFA Organization. In addition, Moore (1994) stated, “There are times when selecting purposive samples would do more to advance the profession than selecting random samples. At times we need to identify the best programs, best teachers, and best FFA Chapters and study them in detail” (p. 11). The researchers suggest that the effectiveness of certain elements of the FFA mission can best be unearthed by selecting a few of FFA’s best and most active members at the national level and engaging them in conversations regarding their experiences in the National FFA Organization.

### **Purpose/Objectives**

The purpose of this study was to determine the perceptions of selected members of the National FFA Organization towards the members’ *level* of FFA involvement and *benefits* from FFA involvement. To fulfill the purposes of the study, the following research questions were addressed:

1. What were selected demographic variables of FFA members attending FFA activities at the national level?
2. What activities did selected FFA members participate in that they perceived were most helpful in their development as a person?
3. What *level* of participation did selected FFA members perceive was most helpful in their development as a person?
4. Were there skills that were learned through FFA participation that selected FFA members were able to transfer to other settings in their life? If so, what were the skills, and what areas did they transfer to?

5. Does active participation in the National FFA Organization accomplish something in selected FFA members' lives that no other activity, group, or organization accomplishes?
6. What are the future plans of selected members of the National FFA Organization after they graduate from high school and/or conclude active participation in the FFA?

### **Methodology**

To obtain the data a series of interviews were conducted at the National FFA Convention in Louisville, Kentucky; a week-long session in July, 1999 at the Washington Leadership Conference, a leadership and citizenship development conference held in Washington D. C. during the summer months; and a week-long session in July, 1999 at the State President's Conference, a premier leadership and citizenship development conference held exclusively for State FFA Presidents and State FFA Officers in Washington D. C. The purpose of the interviews was to obtain rich, thick descriptions of the impact of involvement in Agricultural Education and FFA on the youth sampled. In addition, the researchers sought to interview FFA members on-site to gain insights from members during the actual events they were actively participating in. Members of the National FFA Organization were randomly selected for interviewing at each of the three events to limit researcher bias, and no attempt should be made to generalize the results to any particular population.

An interview guide was developed and used by the researchers for all interviews. The interview guide was developed by the researchers and input was received from agricultural education professionals from Purdue University and members of the National FFA staff headquartered in Indianapolis, Indiana. The interview guide contained questions used to explore the members' *level* of FFA involvement and *benefits* from FFA involvement.

The researchers determined that a minimum of 10 and a maximum of 30 interviews should be conducted at each event. This range allowed for data saturation and repetition to occur. In total, interviews were conducted with 63 members of the National FFA Organization. Interviews were conducted to collect information regarding student attitudes and perceptions about their family, skills, and issues in their future such as school and work. Furthermore, the interviews sought to gather FFA members' perceptions concerning their involvement in the National FFA Organization and the influence FFA has had upon various aspects of their life.

Twenty-nine interviews were conducted during the Washington Leadership Conference session that was held July 6-11, 1999, and ten interviews were conducted during the State President's Conference held July 26-August 1, 1999. An additional 24 interviews were conducted at the National FFA Convention on October 28, 1999. Data were analyzed using an open coding system. Strauss and Corbin (1990) state "open coding...is the analytical process by which concepts are identified and developed in terms of their properties and dimensions" (p. 74). Conceptual labels were placed on the answers FFA members provided. The answers were then analyzed to determine similarities and differences. Conceptual labels were then grouped into categories comprised of similar properties.

### **Quantitative Findings**

Research question 1 sought to determine demographic characteristics of selected FFA members participating in the National FFA Convention, Washington Leadership Conference,

and State FFA President’s Conference. Table one details selected demographic variables. The average age of participants randomly selected at the three national conferences was 17.1 years of age. Forty-four percent of the participants were female, and three out of four had a family member previously involved in agricultural education, FFA, or 4-H. Two in five were 4-H members and, as a group, had a grade point average of 3.48 (out of 4.00 index). Two-thirds were active in a church youth group, 55% participated in sports during the school year, and 87% were involved in a club activity during the school year other than FFA.

Table 1  
Selected Demographics of FFA Members Participating in National FFA Convention, Washington Leadership Conference, and State President’s Conference (N=63)

<b>Category</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage</b>
<b>Age</b>	15	3	4.8
	16	15	23.8
	17	28	44.4
	18	11	17.5
	>18	6	9.5
<b>Gender</b>	Male	35	55.6
	Female	28	44.4
<b>Grade</b>	10	4	6.3
	11	19	30.2
	12	28	44.4
	College Freshman	7	11.1
	College Sophomore	4	6.3
	College Junior	1	1.6
<b>Ethnicity</b>	White	61	96.8
	Black	1	1.6
	Hispanic	0	0
	Asian American	0	0
	Multiracial	1	1.6
	Native American	0	0

Table 1 (Continued)

Category	Response	Frequency	Percentage
<b>Parents/Siblings in Ag Education, FFA, 4-H</b>	Yes	48	76.2
	No	15	23.8
<b>Live on <sup>a</sup></b>	Farm	37	58.7
	Rural	21	33.3
	Urban	3	4.8
	City	2	3.2
<b>Current 4-H Member</b>	Yes, current member	27	42.9
	No, former member	22	34.9
	No	14	22.2
<b>Grade Point Average <sup>b</sup></b>	2.50-2.99	6	9.5
	3.00-3.49	19	30.2
	3.50-4.00	35	55.5
	missing	3	4.8
<b>Participated in any activity</b>	Yes	61	96.8
	No	2	3.2
	Sports	35	55.5
	Clubs other than FFA	54	85.7
	Church Youth Group	41	65.0

<sup>a</sup> Urban defined as area with subdivisions, many stoplights, and lots of stores. City defined as area with little open space except for parks, one or more shopping malls, is one of most populated areas of the state. <sup>b</sup> Self-reported and converted by the researchers to a scale of 4=A, 3=B, 2=C, 1=D, 0=F.

### Qualitative Findings

Research question 2 sought to determine the activities that selected FFA members perceived were most helpful in their development as a person. Sixty-three subjects responded to this question providing a total of 122 answers. Twenty-one subjects out of 63 answered with leadership oriented training as the first response that came to mind when asked this question. This represents 33 percent of the sample. Furthermore, 36 total individuals (57%) responded to the question by referencing leadership training in some part of their answer. Responses included:

*Leadership training; Leadership camp; Leadership conferences*

Thirty-two percent (20 of 63) of the respondents indicated through their initial answer that “parliamentary procedure, public speaking opportunities, and serving as an officer” was the FFA activity that was most helpful for them in their development as a person. Also, 39 of the 63 subjects, 62% of the sample, included leadership opportunities in their answer. Responses included:

*Leadership opportunities in parliamentary procedure and/or public speaking;  
Leadership opportunities such as being an officer*

Nine of 63 individuals answered that “participation in State and/or National FFA Convention” was the most helpful FFA activity in their development as a person, accounting for 14 percent of the respondents. In all, 13 individuals, 21% of the subjects, listed this response when answering this question. Answers included:

*Participation in State FFA Convention; and/or Participation in National FFA Convention*

Eleven respondents answered that the most helpful FFA activity to their development as a person included some form of Supervised Agricultural Experiences, and/or activities that may be related to their SAE. This represented 17 percent who answered with SAE as their first response to the question. Overall, 35 percent of the subjects, 22 of 63 subjects, included Supervised Agricultural Experiences and related activities in their answer. Responses included:

*Supervised Agricultural Experiences; Career Development Events; Proficiency Awards; Showing at Fair*

Finally, four subjects, 6 percent of the sample, perceived some involvement in chapter events, participation in the Program of Activities, involvement in community service, and the curriculum in their agricultural education classes as the most helpful FFA activity in their development as a person. Overall, 17 percent of the subjects, 11 of 63, included these activities somewhere in their answer. Answers included:

*Agricultural Education curriculum; Chapter Events; Program of Activities;  
Community Service*

Research question 3 sought to determine what *level* of participation did selected FFA members perceive was most helpful in their development as a person. Thirty-four percent of the subjects, 21 of 61, identified participation at the local level as the most helpful. When asked how it was helpful the following responses were given:

*The opportunity to make friends; the opportunity to do things with people in the chapter; being able to receive support*

In response to the same question seven of 61 subjects, 11 percent, identified participation at the district level as the most helpful. When asked how it was helpful the following responses were given:

*The district level has helped me overcome my shyness; the district level experience was a growing process*

Thirty-one percent of the subjects, representing 19 of 61 respondents, identified participation at the state level as the most helpful. When asked how it was helpful the following responses were given:

*Competition in FFA activities at the state level is harder and/or more challenging*

Finally, 23 percent of the subjects identified activities at the national level as the most helpful in their development as a person. Fourteen of the 61 subjects who provided that answer stated it was most helpful for the following reason:

*Can appreciate the larger scope of the organization; I received skills to be successful in the future; a greater opportunity to meet more people*

Research question 4 asked members of the National FFA Organization to identify if there were skills that were learned through FFA participation that they were able to transfer to other settings in their life. If so, what were the skills, and what areas did they transfer to? Subjects involved in the National FFA Convention, Washington Leadership Conference, and the State President's Conference were asked to give an example of a situation other than FFA or agricultural education classes when they used a leadership skill that they gained in the FFA. Twenty-six of the 62 subjects who answered the question responded that school activities including sports, class, school officer activities, and other high school courses were activities where they were able to use leadership skills they had gained through the FFA. This response accounted for 42 percent of the sample. Answers to the question included:

*School activity – Class office, other high school class; school sports*

Twenty-one subjects responded to the question by answering they used a leadership skill gained in the FFA to make a presentation that was of an agricultural nature. Audiences included alumni groups, commodity groups, and presentations to agricultural education supporters. This represented 21 percent of the sample. Answers included:

*Agriculture related speech; presentation to commodity groups; presentation to alumni organization; presentation to the local Farm Bureau*

Eleven percent of the respondents indicated the leadership skills they gained in the FFA were most useful for them in no specific activity, but rather most useful in their everyday interaction with others and their ability to communicate with co-workers and fellow students.

This represented seven of the 62 individuals responding to the question. Responses given included:

*Everyday communication; working with other people*

Five of 62 respondents, 8 percent, indicated they were able to transfer the leadership skill they gained in FFA into activities involving participation in a 4-H club, and nine percent of the subjects, six students, identified church and other activities as the location they were able to use the leadership skills they gained in FFA. Answers included:

*4-H Club; Church and other opportunities*

Research question number 5 asked FFA members to respond to the question “does the FFA do something for you that no other activity, group, or organization does? If yes, please explain.” Sixty-three individuals responded to this question providing researchers with 89 different answers. Twelve of 63 individuals indicated “leadership training and leadership opportunities” as the first response that came to their mind when asked this question. This represents 19 percent of all responses to this question. An additional eight subjects responded with this answer as their second or third response to the question for a total of 20 of 63 individuals who responded with some form of leadership training and/or leadership opportunities when asked this question. This represents 32 percent of all responses given to the question. Responses included:

*The FFA provides leadership training and leadership opportunities; the FFA builds confidence and personal pride*

Eleven of 63 individuals indicated “teaches life skills” as the first response that came to their mind when asked this question. This represents 17 percent of all responses to this question. In total, 12 of 63 subjects responded with this answer as their first, second, or third response to the question representing 19 percent of the responses. Responses included:

*Teaches me life skills; helps me understand agriculture; allows me to help others; gets me involved*

Ten of 63 individuals indicated “preparation for the future” as the first response that came to their mind when asked this question representing 16 percent of the overall subjects, while 24 percent of all students answered the question with some form of career preparation and/or thoughts about the future. Answers included:

*Causes me to think about my future; Allows for career preparation; Causes me to work harder in school and for scholarships*

Seven of 63 individuals indicated “meeting people” as the first response that came to their mind when asked this question representing eleven percent of all subjects, while 21 percent of all students answered the question with some form of meeting new people/getting to know

individuals from a variety of geographic locations as their response to this question. Answers included:

*Chance to be with people from all over the United States and/or the chance to meet new people*

Seven of 63 individuals indicated the opportunity to travel as the first response that came to their mind when asked this question representing eleven percent of all subjects. Ten of the 63 respondents, representing 16 percent of the subjects, answered the question with travel opportunities as either their first, second, or third answer listed.

Research question number 6 asked for FFA members to identify their future plans after they graduate from high school and/or conclude active participation in the FFA. As an open-ended question multiple responses were accepted. The following answers were collected:

*Attend college (either 4-year, 2-year, technical school)*  
*Involvement in an agriculture related career*  
*Teaching (in general)*  
*Agricultural Education Teacher*

Fifty-six of the subjects indicated they planned to attend some form of education beyond high school graduation. This represented 89 percent of the sample. Sixty-five of the respondents, 41 of 63 subjects, indicated they planned to be involved in an agriculture related career. Teaching, in general, accounted for 22 percent of the responses. Fourteen of the 63 subjects gave this answer to the question concerning their future plans. Finally, 8 of 63 subjects (representing 13 percent) indicated their future plans included becoming an Agricultural Education teacher.

### **Conclusions, Implications, and Recommendations**

According to demographic data for selected members of the National FFA Organization who participated in the 1999 National FFA Convention, 1999 Washington Leadership Conference, and the 1999 State President's Conference the majority are juniors and seniors in high school, almost entirely Caucasian, live on farms or in rural areas, and have either parents or siblings who participated in agricultural education, FFA, or 4-H. In addition, they achieve good grades and almost all are active in something *other* than FFA. This includes sports, other clubs, and/or church related youth group.

This implies that FFA members attending national activities are good students and are active in school and community events. This also implies that few minorities and those living in city and urban settings are likely to participate in activities at the national level. It is recommended that members of the planning staff of national FFA activities create materials portraying opportunities for minorities, urban members, and first generation FFA members in an effort to attract *all* FFA members to participate in activities at the national level.

When asked for the activities that were most helpful to their development, 62% of selected FFA members answered with leadership training and/or leadership opportunities. One

could expect this answer since two of the three activities where interviews were conducted were conferences seen by many to focus on premier leadership development. However, 35% also indicated that participation in Supervised Agricultural Experiences, Career Development Events, Proficiency Awards, and showing at their local fair were helpful. This implies that selected students who are actively pursuing leadership training are also interested in gaining experience in career exploration. As a result, staff of the National FFA Organization should take steps to insure that the general public, contributors, local stakeholders, and school officials are aware that the FFA's mission that "FFA makes a positive difference in the lives of students by developing their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success through agricultural education" is working and available for students willing to take advantage of the opportunity.

When asked what level of participation was most helpful in their development, the most common response, 34 percent, was that participation at the local level was the most helpful. Selected FFA members indicated that making friends and receiving support was how the local level had helped them. Although every participant was interviewed at an FFA activity occurring at the national level this implies that regardless of the excitement and enthusiasm that traveling and seeing new places fosters, selected FFA members believe that nothing is as important as participation at the local level. Local agricultural education teachers should focus on ensuring healthy, local participation from all students in their program *before* attempting to solicit students to become active at the district, state, and national levels.

Selected students were asked to identify another setting where they used a leadership skill that was learned through participation in the FFA. Forty-two percent of the respondents in the study indicated they used leadership skills gained in the FFA in other school related activities. Examples included student council, class office, school sports, and involvement in other high school classes. The second most common answer included presentations to commodity groups, alumni organizations, and/or local farm bureaus. This implies that these students are indeed utilizing and transferring the leadership skills gained in the FFA to other activities within their school and community. It is recommended that, although these were selected students at national activities, local agricultural education teachers encourage students to capitalize on every opportunity to practice their leadership skills regardless of the setting in order to gain needed experience in leadership development.

When selected students were asked if participation in the National FFA Organization did something for them that no other activity, group, or organization does, 32% of respondents indicated that the FFA helped them build confidence and personal pride. In addition, they indicated that FFA provided them with leadership training and leadership opportunities. This indicates that for the selected FFA members involved in this study many of them were more confident in themselves after participating in the FFA than they were before they became involved. Although it is difficult to determine if the growth in personal pride and confidence was a result of participation in the National FFA Organization, it is recommended that a further study look into this aspect of personal development as a function of membership and participation in FFA. If this is indeed true, this information can be useful for informing parents of the approximately 350,000 secondary agricultural education students who are not FFA members in hopes of encouraging more students to participate.

Finally, selected FFA members of this study were asked for their future plans. Eighty-nine percent indicated they planned to participate in some form of post-secondary education, and 65% of the members plan to become involved in an agricultural related career. This implies that

for the FFA members selected for this study the majority have found careers in agriculture to be a good fit. Further studies should examine if this number is consistent with the general membership of the FFA and the general population of the approximately 800,000 agricultural education students across the nation.

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# **Building Confidence and Personal Pride: Perceptions of Selected FFA Members Toward Involvement in the National FFA Organization**

## **A Critique**

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### Contribution and Significance of Research

The FFA has long been recognized as the heartbeat of secondary level agricultural education programs. This study more than takes the pulse; it is a stress test on that heartbeat. Organizations are born, thrive, wither and die based on the perceived benefits of membership.

This examination of the perceived benefits of the FFA to those most likely to serve as its future leaders is both timely and important. These young people had all chosen to attend national leadership events. While not necessarily a clear reflection of the average FFA member, they should closely resemble those who will rise to the top of the National FFA organization. This study may be viewed as providing evidence of client-satisfaction from the future leadership of the FFA.

Like the Croom/Flowers and the Wakefield/Talbert papers presented at this conference, this study also raises issues about the diversity of the FFA. We clearly need to work toward a national consensus to provide direction to the profession to work toward achieving diversity in the years ahead.

This is a benchmark study addressing perceptions of benefits and levels of participation in the National FFA organization the early 2000s. The authors are to be commended for examining an issue with such high potential implications for the profession.

### Procedural Considerations

The purpose and objectives were clear, and well supported by the theoretical framework.

The authors are to be commended for using appropriate methods to address the research questions formulated. Many in the profession continue to avoid qualitative research methods, even when they would be most appropriate for given research question. Qualitative methods allow us to examine samples selected with a narrow purpose. The population identified in this study made logical sense; interviews were conducted at three of the flagship leadership events of the National FFA.

An interview guide was developed and used to guide questioning. Open coding was appropriately used. Because qualitative methods are still so new to this profession, this reviewer would like to see a bit more methodological detail. How did the researchers ensure credibility? Were member checks conducted? How did the authors address dependability? Were overlapping methods used? Was a dependability audit performed? Qualitative researchers need to continue to educate those of us unfamiliar with the methodology.

### Questions for Consideration

Looking ahead, what pragmatic, systematic, continuing steps can be incorporated into strategies that teachers, area and state-level supervisors, and teacher educators can use to accurately communicate the benefits of FFA membership to all students? What implications for

action can be drawn from the conclusion that local-level leadership activities are in fact the most beneficial for the members' "development as a person?" Are resources currently being applied to the most appropriate levels to maximize the benefit for FFA member's development?