

A STUDY OF THE MEMBERSHIP OF THE NATIONAL FFA ALUMNI ASSOCIATION:  
VOLUNTEERING, LOYALTY, AND BENEFITS

by

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B.S., Kansas State University, 1977  
M.S., Kansas State University, 1982

AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Department of Curriculum and Instruction  
College of Education

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Manhattan, Kansas

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## **Abstract**

There has been little research conducted related to the National FFA Alumni Association since its establishment in 1971. The purposes of this study were to determine the demographic characteristics of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association, determine whether differences exist regarding members' motivation to join and engage themselves in the local FFA Alumni affiliate, and whether differences exist in members' loyalty to the FFA Alumni at the national and local levels based on their level of engagement. This descriptive study utilized survey research to accomplish the purpose, assessing the motivational functions for volunteering and measuring loyalty to the local FFA Alumni affiliate and the National FFA Alumni Association. The population of this study was the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association for the 2009-2010 membership year ( $N = 49,589$ ). A proportional stratified random sample ( $n = 1,000$ ) was used to identify study participants and ensure representation from the four membership regions of the National FFA Alumni Association. Based on a final usable sample ( $n = 913$ ), the researcher obtained a final response rate of 43.7% ( $n = 399$ ).

The National FFA Alumni Association is comprised of predominantly white, male, college-educated, actively engaged former FFA members with an average age of 49.6 years. The results of independent sample  $t$ -tests indicated a significant difference between male and female members in the importance they place on six motivations for volunteering. Female members were considerably higher in the motivational functions of values, understanding, enhancement, social, career, and protective. A correlation analysis also indicated that age of the respondents played a role in the motivation to volunteer. Older members were less motivated in the areas of career, understanding, values, and enhancement. Paired samples  $t$ -tests determined members were significantly more loyal to the local FFA Alumni affiliate than the National FFA Alumni Association. There was also a significant difference in the loyalty of members based on their level of engagement with a local FFA Alumni affiliate with more highly engaged members expressing more loyalty to the association.

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application and make an impact on the profession. I wanted to do something that would make a difference to someone, not just go through a process. The FFA Alumni staff have already provided evidence that there will be opportunities to share the findings of the study and fulfill my goal of impacting the profession.

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## **Chapter 1**

### **Introduction**

The National FFA Alumni Association was formed in 1971 to provide assistance and support to high school agricultural education programs. As the organization nears its 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary, the focus has remained very similar. Today, the local FFA Alumni affiliate is considered “one of the most productive methods for developing community support for an agricultural education program” (Talbert, Vaughn, & Croom, 2005, p. 135).

The mission statement of the National FFA Alumni Association provides insight into the purpose of the organization. “The mission of the National FFA Alumni Association is to secure the promise of FFA and agricultural education by creating an environment where people and communities can develop their potential for premier leadership, personal growth, and career success” (National FFA Alumni, 2009, p. 2). One purpose of the National FFA Alumni Association is “to promote the personal development of the FFA and FFA Alumni members and volunteers” (p. 4).

FFA Alumni members are engaged by local FFA advisors in a variety of ways. Some of the more common activities include chaperoning trips, fund raising, coaching FFA Career Development Events, assisting with FFA activities, serving on advisory committees, and serving as guest speakers in the classroom (Seavers & Rosencrans, 2001). Elliot and Suvedi (1990) found that in Michigan, volunteers were also used on field trips, assisting with Supervised Agricultural Experience programs, and other FFA leadership activities.

Seavers and Rosencrans (2001) reported that “agricultural educators indicated a positive attitude toward the involvement of volunteers in their programs” (p. 75). They also identified the need for volunteers in agricultural education programs for programs to be effective. With this

research showing the importance of the local FFA Alumni, the benefit to the local agricultural education program, and the positive attitude of the teacher towards volunteers, there may be an assumption that every agricultural education program would have a local FFA Alumni affiliate. However, this is not the case. Currently, there are 1,263 local affiliates in 50 states, with a membership of 49,589. However, only 42 of those states have active state associations (P. McDonald, personal communication, October 28, 2010). With 7,487 FFA chapters nationwide, this is only 17% of the potential number of affiliates. However, in 1989 there were approximately 1,200 affiliates with a membership of over 30,000 (Cox, 1989). Over the past 20 years, there has only been an increase of approximately 60 affiliates and fewer than 20,000 members.

In 1989 Cox, Executive Director of the National FFA Alumni Association, provided a vision of the importance the organization would have on agricultural education. “As we approach the 21<sup>st</sup> century, the FFA Alumni will be one of the essential areas that will affect the direction of agricultural education. We must all be aware of its importance and become involved in providing the leadership necessary to help the FFA Alumni grow in its support at the local, state, and national levels” (p. 7).

Twenty years later, the National Council for Agricultural Education (2009) identified the need for an active FFA Alumni affiliate at the local level in order to meet the *National Quality Program Standards for Secondary Agricultural Education Programs*. By setting those standards, the importance of organizing and maintaining a local FFA Alumni affiliate became a focus of attention for agricultural education programs.

In December 2008, the leadership of the National FFA Alumni Association brought together a task force for a strategic planning session to identify the future path upon which the

FFA Alumni should focus attention. Members of this group were charged with identifying how to achieve the two long range goals for the association. Goal one is that every FFA chapter has an active and fully engaged FFA Alumni affiliate at the local level by 2020. Goal two is for the National FFA Alumni Association to be leaders in advocacy for agricultural education by 2020.

From this meeting, two primary themes were revealed. The first, data collection and research, challenged the leadership to further identify the characteristics and demographics of the membership and the types of data needed to better understand the current status of the National FFA Alumni Association. The second theme related to marketing of the FFA Alumni. This theme included why members join a local affiliate, what benefits they receive, how to market to new members, and how to engage them locally.

Another challenge was to identify if the name, FFA Alumni, was a deterrent to attracting members. Membership in the National FFA Alumni Association is unlike most other alumni organizations. Membership is not limited to former FFA members, but is open to individuals with a sincere interest in promoting, supporting, and engaging in the local FFA chapter (Talbert et al., 2005). Because of the open membership policy, there is a great opportunity to reach out to every person in a community as a potential member, not just the past members of the local FFA chapter.

A major challenge facing the National FFA Alumni Association is how to narrow the gap of over 6,000 FFA chapters that do not currently have local FFA Alumni affiliates. Many of these chapters have other support groups in place that are not formally affiliated with the National FFA Alumni Association (Heinert, 2008). The exact number is not known because there is no method of collecting information from individually operated support groups in local chapters.

As the National FFA Alumni Association takes on the challenge of goal one, to have a local FFA Alumni affiliate associated with every FFA chapter, it will become critical to know how to market the organization to potential members. It is common for organizations to seek ways to market to new volunteers and “to gain greater insight into volunteers and volunteering organizations, with the aim of providing practitioners with the information and tools that allow them to compete more effectively” (Randle & Dolnicar, 2009, p. 272).

National FFA Alumni staff would benefit from knowing if members understand the relationship between the national and local levels. Members join the FFA Alumni affiliate at the local level, but most of their membership dues are sent to the state and national associations. If members are aware of the relationship between the national and local levels, it is important to understand the differences in their loyalty to both the national association and the local affiliate. A common tool by which loyalty is measured is the Net Promoter Score (Reichheld, 2003)

The National FFA Organization and the National FFA Alumni Association are both using the Net Promoter Score (NPS) as a tool to improve customer loyalty and improve communication and relationships with their members, as well as internal and external stakeholders (D. Armstrong, personal communication, February, 2010). The National FFA Organization has invested heavily in both time and resources into the NPS process for determining customer loyalty. The NPS will be the tool for evaluating most divisions and teams within the organization. The NPS generated by this study for the National FFA Alumni will be a baseline score for future NPS surveys and will be helpful for evaluation of future initiatives (F. Saldana, personal communication, August, 2010).

## **Statement of the Problem**

There has been very little research conducted relating to the National FFA Alumni Association since its establishment in 1971. Seevers and Rosencrans (2001) stated “limited studies have been conducted to identify how volunteers are used in agricultural education settings” (p 73). Heinert (2008) also found little empirical research related to the FFA Alumni in a review of the literature. Only limited, informal surveys have been conducted to determine the demographics of the membership.

The national staff and executive council of the National FFA Alumni Association do not know the demographic makeup of their members, their reasons for becoming involved, and the perceived benefits to members. In order to achieve the strategic goal of every FFA chapter having an active FFA Alumni affiliate, it will be imperative that the leadership of the national association better understand who their current members are. To reach new members, it is important to understand why members join, what motivates them to become involved in volunteer activities, and what they perceive the personal benefits are for joining a local affiliate (F. Saldana, personal communication, April 18, 2009).

Katz (1983) identified the need for additional information on how to use volunteers in agricultural education, suggesting that any increased involvement from volunteers would be severely inhibited unless more research was done. Elliot and Suvedi (1990) recommended that agricultural education teachers should use volunteers more frequently. More recent research by Myers, Dyer, and Washburn (2005) identified a major problem facing beginning agriculture teachers. More than 85% of beginning teachers said that the biggest problem they faced was organizing an effective FFA Alumni affiliate. Three of the top five problems identified dealt with support group issues. However, according to Garton and Chung (1996), utilizing an FFA

Alumni affiliate received low priority for in-service needs for beginning teachers by state

Department of Education staff and other agriculture teachers.

Fritz (2001), in a critique of Seavers and Rosencrans' (2001) study about the involvement of the FFA Alumni in New Mexico, provided the following rationale for the need to further study the FFA Alumni:

The study leaves one to ask another question, why do volunteers opt to become involved in agricultural education programs? Is it because they were in the agricultural education program during their youth, they have children involved in the program, they are interested in sharing their expertise? The list of possibilities is much longer than the one presented, but understanding why volunteers choose to participate could go a long way to understanding how to effectively engage and retain volunteers. (p 106)

## **Purposes of the Study**

The purposes of this study were to determine the demographic characteristics of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association, determine whether differences exist regarding members' motivation to join and engage themselves in the local FFA Alumni affiliate, and determine whether differences exist in members' loyalty to the FFA Alumni at the national and local levels. Knowledge of this information may provide a better understanding of current members and allow for the desired growth within the National FFA Alumni Association.

## **Research Questions**

The research questions used to guide this study were as follows:

1. What are the demographic characteristics (gender, age, ethnicity, residence, education, occupation, income, affiliation, engagement) of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association?

2. Are there differences in the motivations for volunteering based on the demographic traits (gender, age, education, affiliation) of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association?
3. What are the perceived benefits to members for joining a local affiliate of the National FFA Alumni Association?
4. Are there differences in members' loyalty to the National FFA Alumni Association and the local FFA Alumni affiliate? Is there a relationship between members' loyalty to the local FFA Alumni affiliate and their level of engagement?

### **Definitions of Terms**

The following definitions are provided for words, terms, or phrases found within the study to ensure a uniform understanding:

*Affiliation* – to have a personal connection to the FFA by having been a member or have a child that is or has been an FFA member.

*Engagement* – to be actively involved and participating with the FFA Alumni at the local, state, or national level.

*FFA Alumni membership* – open to anyone who is interested in supporting and promoting agricultural education and the FFA on the local, state and national level (National FFA Alumni Manual, 2009).

*Local affiliate* – A group chartered with the National FFA Alumni when it has at least 10 charter members who have paid state and national dues; local affiliates may affiliate directly with the National FFA Alumni Association when no State Association exists and its bylaws and/or constitution are in harmony with the National FFA Alumni and has an executive group with officers (National FFA Alumni, 2009).

*Volunteers* – persons who performed unpaid volunteer activities (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2010).

### **Limitations of the Study**

This study was limited to the current membership of the 2009-2010 roster of the National FFA Alumni Association. It is commonly agreed upon by the leadership of the FFA Alumni that there could be members or active volunteers at the local level that do not pay national dues and are therefore not on the roster. It is also understood by the National FFA Alumni staff that the list of members on current rosters may include names of members who are no longer considered active, or may even be deceased. Local rosters are submitted annually to the national association. Local personnel submitting rosters may or may not purge names of deceased members that have submitted their lifetime dues. There are also life members of the national FFA Alumni that do not belong to a local affiliate, and are therefore not associated with a local FFA chapter.

Another limitation of the study is that it dealt with only one aspect of the FFA Alumni, volunteerism. While it is widely accepted that a major function of the FFA Alumni is volunteerism, it by no means is the only function of the association. Many members may find additional reasons to join and are not actively involved in any volunteer related activities. Members may join the local, state, or national level for various reasons other than volunteerism, such as advocacy, financial support, or to maintain contact with their children's activities.

Survey fatigue may also have been a limitation. The survey may have been so lengthy that there could have been reduced responses by the time the participants got to the end of the survey. The recommended length of a survey is between two and four pages (Krathwohl, 1998). The actual length of this survey was four pages with 54 questions.

Another limitation related to the survey is the survey method itself. There are natural limitations with using survey research to gather data. There is a possibility that the responses of participants do not accurately represent the views of the population. It is possible that the respondents' interpretation of the questions were different than intended (Gall, Gall, & Borg, 2003).

The focus of this study was to determine the motivations to volunteer, not the actual behavior or action of volunteering. Clary et al. (1998) provided evidence of the relationship between the motivation to volunteer and the act of volunteering. However, only measuring motivation to volunteer may be considered a limitation of this study.

A final limitation of this study may be construed that some costs associated with the distribution of the instrument were paid for by the National FFA Alumni Association. No compensation to the researcher was provided by the FFA Alumni, nor was there any financial remuneration for any respondents for completing the survey.

### **Assumptions**

It was assumed that the membership database of the National FFA Alumni Association was an accurate list from which to select the sample for this study. It was also assumed that the people in this database would know that they were members of the National FFA Alumni Association. By accessing this database, another assumption was that the addresses would be accurate, complete, and deliverable according to the United States Postal Service (USPS).

As for responses on the survey, it was assumed that the study participants would answer honestly and take the time to complete all items on the questionnaire. An assumption was also made that the answers provided for the motivations to volunteer accurately portrayed the true reasons for which members volunteered.

## **Chapter 2**

### **Review of the Literature**

Volunteerism is a major focus of the National FFA Alumni Association, yet little research exists related to the reasons for which FFA Alumni members volunteer in their local affiliates (Heinert, 2008). A review of the literature also showed a scarcity of information related to the demographics of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association. What literature was found identified the need for additional research (Heinert, 2008; Katz, 1983; Seavers & Rosencrans, 2001). The literature review provided a framework for this study and is presented as follows: the need for volunteers; a review of the National FFA Alumni Association; the theoretical framework for the study; measuring motivation to volunteer; and the recruitment, retention, and loyalty of volunteers.

#### **The Need for Volunteers**

Volunteerism is alive and well in the United States of America. In 2009, over 63.3 million people volunteered in a variety of organizations, activities, and functions. This accounts for 26.8% of the population of the United States. This number shows an increase from 26.4% in 2008 (Bureau of Labor Statistics [BLS], 2010). Educational or youth service-related organizations were preceded only by religious organizations as the most common cause for which volunteers invested their time.

Bussell and Forbes (2002) described those who volunteer to be “an extremely diverse group, active in a wide variety of contexts” (p. 244). Clary et al. (1998) described the characteristics of a volunteer in the following manner:

Volunteers: a) often seek out opportunities to help others; (b) may deliberate for considerable amounts of time about whether to volunteer, the extent of their involvement,

and the degree to which particular activities fit with their own personal needs; and (c) may make a commitment to an ongoing helping relationship that may extend over a considerable period of time and that may entail considerable personal costs of time, energy, and opportunity. (p. 1517)

In order to maintain an effective agricultural education program, there is a definite need for volunteers, as described by Clary et al. (1998). Seevers and Rosencrans (2001) reported that agriculture teachers had positive attitudes toward using volunteers in their programs. Katz (1983) identified the need for additional information on how to use volunteers in agricultural education, noting that any increased involvement from volunteers would be severely inhibited unless more research was completed.

This leads to the problem in agricultural education as it relates to volunteers. “Limited studies have been conducted to identify how volunteers are used in agricultural education settings. More and more demands with fewer resources are being placed on agricultural educators. What is the role of volunteers in agricultural education?” (Seevers & Rosencrans, 2001, p. 73). Since the primary source of volunteers in agricultural education is the National FFA Alumni Association, additional information about this group is warranted.

### **The National FFA Alumni Association**

A review of the literature showed a dearth of research related to the National FFA Alumni Association. Since Katz (1983) called for additional research on the role of the FFA Alumni in agricultural education, very few studies have been reported in the *Journal of Agricultural Education* or *The Agricultural Education Magazine*, the primary references for agricultural education research. The National Research Agenda for the American Association of

Agricultural Educators (Osborne, n.d.) does not specifically address the FFA Alumni as an area of focus.

In 1989, an entire issue of *The Agricultural Education Magazine* was devoted to the FFA Alumni. The theme, “The FFA Alumni – A Program Tool” focused on promising practices, roles of alumni members in volunteering, ideas for advocacy, and how to recruit members. Cox (1989) identified the importance of the FFA Alumni as an essential component in the success and growth of agricultural education into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Elliot and Suvedi (1990) examined the roles of volunteers in agricultural education programs in Michigan, but did not specify the FFA Alumni as a target group. Garton and Chung (1996) identified utilizing an FFA Alumni affiliate as a topic of potential in-service education for beginning teachers, but the results of that study returned that subject as a low priority. Another 1996 study by Dormody, Seevers, and Clason addressed the role of multiple adult support groups in agricultural education, including the FFA Alumni, the National Young Farmers Education Association, and advisory committees. Seevers and Rosencrans (2001) reported that the attitudes of teachers towards their use of volunteers were positive. However, their study did not specifically address the FFA Alumni as the support group of choice. Myers et al. (2005) identified managing the local FFA Alumni and other adult groups as topics for in-service needs of beginning teachers, in direct contrast with the earlier findings of Garton and Chung (1996). Finally, Heinert (2008) provided the most current research related to FFA Alumni as a volunteer organization. He reported that a local volunteer organization has a huge impact on the local FFA chapter in achieving the FFA Alumni mission statement. None of these studies addressed the issues of benefits for the local member or why members chose to volunteer for their local affiliates or the national association.

The only study focused directly on the demographics of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association was a non-scientific convenience questionnaire limited to the life-members of the association (F. Saldana, personal communication, March, 2009). The results of that survey ( $n = 582$ ) reported the average age of a life-member to be 60 years old, with male members composing 81.5% of the sample, and nearly half were college graduates. Also, over 77% had been FFA members in high school. However, this study only provided a snapshot of a limited number of members representing a specific component of the membership and cannot be generalized to the rest of the membership.

Currently, the FFA Alumni membership consists of 49,589 members, of whom 30,504 are life-members, having paid their lifetime dues. While FFA Alumni members live in all 50 states, Puerto Rico, the District of Columbia, and Canada, only 42 states have active state associations and report membership for 1,263 local affiliates (P. McDonald, personal communication, October, 2010). The local FFA Advisor normally serves in a dual role as the local FFA Alumni advisor (Talbert et al., 2005).

The National FFA Alumni Association has identified two strategic long-range goals for the organization. These are (a) every FFA chapter has an active and fully engaged FFA Alumni affiliate at the local level, and (b) to become leaders in advocacy for agricultural education (Atherton, 2009). While these are the two identified goals for the FFA Alumni, their purposes are many and varied. According to the FFA Alumni Bylaws (National FFA Alumni, 2009), there are six purposes, three of which address volunteer activities. These three include:

1. To support and promote FFA activities and agricultural education on local, state and national levels.

2. To provide a tie to and assist FFA and agricultural education personnel to involve former members, supporters, and volunteers in worthy activities.
3. To promote the personal development of the FFA and FFA alumni members and volunteers.

In an effort to achieve these three purposes, the National FFA Alumni Association, in cooperation with Purdue University Agricultural Education staff, developed the “Volunteer Development Training Materials” (National FFA Alumni, 2010). This set of 10 modules includes lesson plans, presentations, and supplemental materials for working with volunteers, teachers, and teacher educators.

The FFA Alumni is recognized by the agricultural education community as the primary organization for providing volunteers and community support for the local agricultural education program (Phipps, Osborne, Dyer, & Ball, 2008; Talbert et al., 2005). The National Council for Agricultural Education (2009) has established standards for secondary agricultural education programs to provide assistance in program improvement. These standards are designed to “develop clear goals and objectives for program improvement” (p. i). Standard number 4.3 specifically identifies the need for an agricultural education program to have an active and organized local FFA Alumni affiliate. To meet the standard, the agricultural education program must meet the following indicator: “An organized campaign by existing volunteers is conducted to increase the capacity and support for the program by seeking new volunteers” (p. 38).

The National FFA Alumni Manual (2009) provides suggested activities for local alumni affiliates. These suggestions are activities for members as well as the local affiliate that support the local FFA chapter and community. However, this document does not provide a list of benefits to the local member for joining the FFA Alumni. A recruitment brochure produced by

the National FFA Alumni (n.d.) lists five benefits of joining the National FFA Alumni Association, but only one, “annual subscription to the National FFA Alumni’s Newsletter, New Visions and for \$2 the FFA New Horizons” (Benefits, 2<sup>nd</sup> para.), is associated with any personal benefit to the individual member. A search of the National FFA Website resulted in no documents identifying specific benefits of joining the Alumni at either the national or local level.

In December 2008, the leadership of the National FFA Alumni Association brought together a task force for a strategic planning session to identify the future path upon which the FFA Alumni should focus its attention. From this meeting, two primary themes were revealed: (a) the need for data collection and research, and (b) marketing of the FFA Alumni Association. Among the questions identified by the task force, there arose a need to determine why members join a local affiliate, what benefits they receive, and how to market to new members. With the absence of information available for recruiting new members, the need for research appears to be accurately identified.

### **Theoretical Framework**

FFA Alumni members across the nation are engaged with their local FFA chapters in many similar volunteer activities (Elliot & Suvedi, 1990; Seavers & Rosencrans, 2001). However, Clary et al. (1998) argued that these members volunteer for different personal reasons to satisfy different psychological functions. This argument is based on the underlying framework of the functional theory of motivation.

The functional theory of motivation is based on the work of Katz (1960) and Smith, Bruner, and White (1956). These theorists in the field of personality and social psychology are well known for their study of attitudes from a functional approach (Clary et al., 1998). The primary principle of the functional theory is that different people having similar beliefs and

attitudes perform the same actions but different psychological functions are served for each person (Clary et al., 1998).

Katz (1960) and Smith et al. (1956) suggest there are four psychological functions affecting a person's actions. Katz posits that some attitudes serve a function of "knowledge," providing an opportunity to understand the world in which people live. Smith et al. also address this function, referring to it as "object appraisal," bringing a sense of awareness of the person's surroundings and understanding his/her place in the world. The innate desire to learn and to share knowledge with others is the foundation for this function.

Another attitude serves a function to help people express their values and convictions. In the words of Katz (1960), that function is "value expressive," and for Smith et al. (1956), that function is called a "quality of expressiveness." These values or convictions center on a personal belief of what is right and wrong and a concern for others' needs.

A third attitude serves an "ego defensive" (Katz, 1960) or "externalization" (Smith et al., 1956) function that addresses the negative impact of undesirable truths affecting the ego. This function addresses the inner sense of responsibility to help those in need, primarily because of guilt or inner conflict related to comparing one's self to the less fortunate.

Along with these three functions that Katz (1960) and Smith et al. (1956) share, each researcher theorizes an additional unique function. The fourth function to which Katz refers is a "utilitarian" function, whereby the attitude of the person is impacted by prior experiences or events, and seeks to attain rewards or shun punishments. This function provides a means for individuals to make choices for participating in activities after rationally weighing the pros and cons of such a decision and the impact that may have on future decisions.

Smith et al. (1956) identifies the “social adjustive” function which addresses attitudes for fitting into or meeting the expectations of important social groups. Social pressure can be exerted in one of two ways. People either feel the need to perform some service so they will fit in or need to get along with a social group, or people choose to participate in an activity because it allows them expand their social circles or provides an avenue by which they can join a new desirable social group.

Clary et al. (1998) reflected on the work of these early researchers and the connection to other popular theories of social psychology which addressed the multidimensional nature of attitudes. In describing this connection, Clary explained:

Part of the appeal of these earlier functional theories was the diversity of motivations that they could embrace, a diversity reflecting to some extent the functional theorists' (e.g., Katz, 1960) invoking of the themes of the grand psychological theories of human nature in the functions they proposed (e.g., the defensive function captures elements of psychodynamic theory, the knowledge function is reminiscent of Gestalt psychology, the expressive function has the flavor of self-psychology about it, and the utilitarian and adjustive functions are reminiscent of the behaviorist perspective on human nature). (p. 1517)

Using the functional application of attitudes by Katz (1960) and Smith et al. (1956), Clary et al. (1998) established a set of motivational functions based on attitudes as they relate directly to the behavior of volunteering. Snyder, Clary, and Stukas (2000) explained that the “acts of volunteerism that are similar on the surface may be supported by different underlying motivations” (p. 368). People may do the same volunteer activities, but do them for different reasons to satisfy different psychological functions.

Clary et al. (1998) posited that there are six motivational functions which are satisfied through volunteering: values, understanding, career, social, protective, and enhancement. Individuals will volunteer if they believe that their actions will address one of these six functions. The six functions identified by Clary et al. (1998) are also aligned with the functional approach of attitudes by Katz (1960) and Smith et al. (1956). Figure 1 presents the functions of the theorists in the terminology of their respective research.

Clary et al.	Katz	Smith et al.
Understanding	Knowledge	Object Appraisal
Values	Value-expressive	Quality of expressiveness
Career	Utilitarian	
Social		Social adjustive
Protective	Ego-defensive	Externalization
Enhancement		

*Figure 1.* Comparison of functions served by volunteering

Phillips (2005) summarized a review of the literature that identified the functional theory as the most applicable for studies determining the motivation to volunteer. Phillips posited that most other similar theories approached volunteerism from very different, specific areas of focus, but that they were all included in some way by the six functions identified by Clary et al. (1998). Phillips (2005) stated, “This broad scope, accompanied by its robust psychometric properties, suggests that functional theory surpasses other motivation theories in its ability to deal with the multifaceted nature of volunteer motivations” (p. 31).

### **Measuring Motivation to Volunteer**

Using the functional application of attitudes as the framework, Clary et al. (1998) developed a tool for measuring motivation for volunteering. This instrument, the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI), is explained in detail in this section, as well as research to which the instrument has applied in a variety of studies.

To explore in further depth the six functions served by volunteerism and motivations on the VFI, Clary et al. (1998), Clary and Snyder (1999), and Snyder et al. (2000) explain the purpose of each function. The first function, “values,” relates to altruistic and humanitarian concerns. “At the heart of the values function is the suggestion that volunteerism is influenced by values about other people’s welfare” (Snyder et al., 2000, p. 370). The values function is consistently found at or near the top of every study in which the VFI is administered. Clary et al. (1998) conducted a study of volunteers engaged in a wide variety of volunteer services, presuming these volunteers inherently possessed relevant motivations for volunteering. The function with the highest mean score in this study ( $n = 467$ ) was the values function ( $M = 5.82$ ) compared to the next highest function, understanding, ( $M = 4.91$ ). This is consistent with additional studies that showed the values function as the most important factor (Burns, Reid, Toncar, Anderson, & Wells, 2008; Papadakis, Griffin, & Frater, 2005).

The second function is “understanding.” This function provides an opportunity for the volunteer to both give as well as receive a personal benefit. Not only does this function allow volunteers to seek new information or skills for their own personal gain, but it also provides an opportunity for them to apply their new or previously held knowledge and skills to those with whom they are working. This function “involves the opportunity for volunteerism to permit new learning experiences and the chance to exercise knowledge, skills, and abilities that might otherwise go unpracticed” (Clary et al. 1998, p. 1518). The understanding function is evident in a study by Gidron where mental health and general health institution volunteers expected to receive personal growth and learning benefits by volunteering their time and knowledge (as cited in Clary et al., 1998).

A third function of volunteerism relates to motivations dealing with relationships. The “social” function is related to both a desire to expand one’s social circles or join new social groups, as well as filling the need to fit in or adapt to the social pressure applied by those in a particular social group. “Volunteering may offer opportunities to be with one’s friends or to engage in an activity viewed favorably by important others” (Clary et al. 1998, p. 1518). Clary et al. described the application of this function in a study by Rosenhan in which civil rights activists were motivated to help because of social rewards as well as punishments.

The fourth function addresses one’s need to further his/her “career” by building career-related skills, relationships, and contacts. Clary et al. (1998) provided an example of a study by Jenner where individuals providing volunteer services for the Junior League perceived their efforts were a means of improving or maintaining their career-related skills.

The “protective” function relates to a person’s need to reduce guilt, address one’s personal problems, or deal with individual inner struggles. If people view themselves as more fortunate than others, they may feel a need to fulfill an inner sense of responsibility to help bring others up to their status. The results of a study by Frisch and Gerrard (1981) help describe the protective function. They reported that some Red Cross volunteers often did so because of a feeling of guilt of their own good fortune.

The final function of “enhancement” is related to the protective function in that both relate to fulfilling a need of the ego. The enhancement function is focused on the positive desire of personal growth and enhancing the self esteem of the volunteer. This function was not specifically addressed by Katz (1960) or Smith et al. (1956) but is an extension of the protective function. This “sixth proposed function of volunteering derives from indications that there may be more to the ego, and especially the ego’s relation to affect, than protective processes” (Clary

et al., 1998, p. 1518). In contrast to the protective function, the enhancement function focuses on positive strivings. Clary et al. reported research on mood that suggests that positive and negative effects are not polar opposites, but separate dimensions on a scale. Snyder et al. (2000) compared this function with that of Maslow's (1954) self actualization by stating, "Thus, individuals may select volunteer activities to feel better about themselves, either because of the good work that they are doing, or because they have a need to improve themselves through volunteer work" (p. 372).

The functional approach has been used extensively for measuring volunteer motivations. Burns et al. (2008) used the VFI to determine if gender had any effect on the motivations of young adults to volunteer. In a study of college students in seven different colleges and universities, 511 participants took the VFI through their involvement in specific courses. The results of the study showed definite differences between the strengths of motivations of male and female students, even though the order in which each gender placed each function was identical. Significant gender differences existed in four of the six motivations. These four were enhancement, protective, understanding, and values. "Expressing values related to altruistic beliefs (altruism)... was observed to be the strongest motivation to volunteer for both males and females whereas escaping from negative feelings (protective) was observed to be weakest motivation for both males and females" (p. 111). Burns et al. concluded that "it may be beneficial for human services agencies and nonprofit organizations to adapt their recruiting techniques to the gender of the potential volunteers" (p. 113).

Papadakis et al. (2005) also studied if there were gender differences in college students' motivation to volunteer, but added the variables of service-oriented and non-service-oriented majors, and those who had volunteered as well as non-volunteers. The results of the study

showed that students who had volunteered rated higher in the functions of values, understanding, and enhancement, and non-volunteers rated the career function as the most important. Female students also placed more importance on values, understanding, and enhancement functions than male students. Service-oriented majors placed more importance on values whereas non-service-oriented majors scored highest in careers. Papadakis et al. concurred with the findings of Burns et al. (2008) in their support of the VFI as a valid instrument for determining motivations and for assisting universities in identifying marketing messages for the appropriate audience.

While Papadakis et al. (2005) focused on young adults, Yoshioka, Brown, and Ashcraft (2007) studied senior adults who had and had not volunteered. A modified VFI designed specifically for senior adults was used with the assumption that the career function would have less importance for those that had retired. Both groups identified values and social functions as important for their motivation to volunteer. However, non-volunteer seniors identified the desire to grow and learn through the functions of enhancement and understanding as important for their motivation to become involved in volunteer activities.

Allison, Okun, and Dutridge (2002) also found the VFI to be a valid instrument when determining if there was a relationship between a person's motivation to volunteer and the future tendency for that person to perform additional volunteer activities within an organization. Burns, Reid, Toncar, Fawcett, and Anderson (2006) described the VFI as "the most comprehensive and commonly used scale to measure individual's motivations for volunteering" (p. 86).

For this study of the National FFA Alumni Association and the motivation for members to volunteer, the VFI appeared to be the appropriate tool to achieve the purpose. The findings of previous research by Clary et al. (1998) defined the purpose of this study through the following:

Our findings have direct implications for organizations dependent on the services of volunteers; such organizations could use (and applied research potentially could demonstrate the utility of using) the VFI to assess the motivations of potential volunteers, or groups of potential volunteers, and then use this information to strategically promote their organizations in ways that speak to the abiding concerns of the volunteers they seek to recruit. (p. 1528)

In relation to the National FFA Alumni, Fritz (2001) asked, “Why do volunteers opt to become involved in agricultural education programs? Is it because they were in the agricultural education program during their youth, they have children involved in the program, they are interested in sharing their expertise?” (p. 106). These questions sound very similar to the question to which Snyder et al. (2000) applied the functionalist approach. Snyder et al. (2000) asked, “What personal and social needs and goals, plans, and motives are served by individuals’ involvement in sustained, planful action, in this case the sustained planful helpfulness that is volunteerism?” (p. 366). When referring to the six psychological functions of the functional approach by Clary et al. (1998), Stukas et al. (2006) suggested “volunteer activities focused on working with young people may offer opportunities to fulfill some or all of these motives for volunteering” (p. 69).

## **Recruitment and Retention of Volunteers**

Research has been used extensively to study why specific groups of people volunteer (Phillips, 2005). The FFA Alumni is a national organization about which very little is known. More information was needed so that specific motivations can be used as a guide for additional recruitment. The literature showed that specific demographic groups have different motives for volunteering (Burns et al., 2008; Papadakis et al., 2005; Yoshioka et al., 2007). In order to

effectively recruit new FFA Alumni members, it was important to know the specific motivations of the FFA Alumni based on demographic variables. This section will address what the literature says about recruitment and retention of volunteers.

Even though the number of people volunteering in the United States has increased by 0.4% to 63.4 million in 2009, there is still a limited number of volunteers available for the many organizations vying for their services. In 2009, almost 69% of all those that volunteered limited their volunteering to only one organization and less than 20% more were involved with two organizations. Just over 11% performed volunteer activities for three or more organizations (BLS, 2010). Therefore, recruiting new volunteers has become a competitive process.

It is increasingly important for non-profit agencies and volunteer-related groups to develop marketing plans for the recruitment of volunteers. Bussell and Forbes (2002) identified the need for agencies to focus on marketing techniques in order to recruit volunteers. They stated, “The key to an organization’s success in recruiting and retaining its volunteers is to have an understanding of its target group” (p. 244). Clary and Snyder (1999) reported that “persuasive messages can motivate people to initiate volunteer service to the extent that the messages are tailored to the specific motivations important to individual recipients of the messages” (p. 158).

Clary et al. (1998) conducted a study to validate the matching of motivations with persuasive messaging as a means of recruiting volunteers. They predicted that “persuasive messages will be effective to the extent that they speak to, or are matched with, the specific motivations important to individual recipients of the message” (p. 1523). A set of six advertisement brochures were developed with specific messages based on the six psychological

functions of volunteerism. These brochures were then presented to subjects that had previously taken the VFI to evaluate their effectiveness and appeal to persuade the individual to volunteer.

**Demographic differences in volunteering.** There were different motivations to volunteer among various groups of people based on the demographic categories of gender, age, education, and personal affiliation. A review of the literature provided insight into the differences among various demographic groups as to who volunteered as well as the motivations for volunteering.

**Gender.** Overall, women volunteer at a higher rate than men according to the BLS (2010). The volunteer rate for women in 2009 was 30.1% while the volunteer rate for men was 23.3%. According to the BLS (2010), “Women volunteered at a higher rate than did men across all age groups, educational levels, and other major demographic characteristics” (p. 1).

The report provided by the BLS (2010) is corroborated by several studies that confirm that gender is a strong predictor of volunteerism. Caldwell and Andereck (1994), Cnaan and Goldberg-Glenn (1991), and Trudeau and Devlin (1996) all confirmed that women are more likely than men to volunteer (as cited in Yoshioka et al., 2007). Even though women volunteered more often, men spent more time volunteering. The BLS (2010) reported that in 2009, women volunteers spent a median of 50 hours volunteering compared to men spending 52 hours on volunteer activities.

Research findings are mixed when examining how gender affects the motivation to volunteer. Some research suggested that male and female volunteers do so for very different reasons. Males may be more likely to volunteer to support their careers and self esteem (Little, 1997) while females volunteer for more social reasons (Wuthnow, 1995) or for motivations related to helping others (Wilson & Musick, 1997). Fletcher and Major (2004) found no

differences in the social or career motivations for volunteering between males and females, but did observe differences for values, understanding, protective, and esteem functions. They also found that females consistently demonstrated a stronger degree of motivation than males for each motivational function. Burns et al. (2008) also found that the values and understanding functions were most important to both genders but females had a much stronger motivation to volunteer in both functions.

**Age.** According to the BLS (2010), age groups most likely to volunteer were those in the 35 to 44-year-old (31.5%) and the 45 to 54-year-old (30.8%) age ranges. Age groups with the lowest volunteer rates were persons in their early twenties (18.8%) and those age 65 and over (23.9%). However, the 65 and over age group volunteered more hours than any other age group at 90 hours per year. The 25 to 34-year-old age group spent the least amount of time volunteering at 36 hours annually.

As a demographic group, young adults were an under-represented market segment. Hankinson and Rochester (2005) reported that young adults are under-represented and should be targeted for their potential interest in volunteerism. Boraas (2003) concurred with that viewpoint and suggested that young adults' views of volunteerism are positive, and that young adults are very actively involved in volunteerism. Burns et al. (2008) provided evidence that "as a demographic group, young adults are very involved in volunteer activities and may reflect an excellent source of volunteers" (p. 99).

The challenge in recruiting young adults into volunteerism is in identifying what motivates them to engage with an organization. Peterson (2004) reported that younger volunteers are motivated by recognition, but older adults are more inclined to volunteer to satisfy a sense of social responsibility. Young adults are dependent on personal needs, benefits, and

interests to spark their willingness to volunteer (Hustinx & Lammertyn, 2003; Rehberg, 2005).

“New volunteers are demanding greater freedom of choice and contained assignments with tangible outcomes” (Shields, 2009, p.140).

In addition, Shields’ (2009) findings are consistent with the goals of the National FFA Alumni Association. With the FFA Alumni focusing on children at the local level, they should be well positioned to attract young volunteers. Shields reported that “young adults were found to be most inclined to volunteer for organizations that were either local and personal or nationally renowned. Organizations benefiting children were also highly regarded” (p. 139). Shields went on to explain further the importance volunteers place on working with children:

Given a list of nine topics typically associated with nonprofit organizations and instructions to rank the topics in terms of which they would be most likely to volunteer aid to, respondents indicated which issues were of most interest to them. . . The mode for children was 1. No topic came close to children in terms of 1-rankings. (p. 151)

***Educational attainment.*** One of the most consistent demographic variables related to motivations for volunteering was the educational attainment of the individual. There is a direct relationship between the level of education and the amount of time spent in volunteer activities (McPherson & Rotolo, 1996; Reed & Selbee, 2000; Yavas & Reicken, 1985). Boraas (2003) also reported that educational attainment had a relationship to the level of volunteering when studying members of Generation Y. When young adults were in school, they were twice as likely to volunteer as students that were not enrolled. Also, recent college graduates were found to be four times more involved in volunteer activities than high school dropouts, and twice as likely as high school graduates.

The BLS (2010) provided a variety of information related to the degree and type of volunteer activities engaged in by individuals of various educational levels. “Individuals with higher levels of educational attainment were more likely to volunteer than were those with less education. Among persons age 25 and over, 42.8% of college graduates volunteered, compared with 18.8% of high school graduates and 8.6% of those with less than a high school diploma” (pp. 2-3).

College graduates volunteered more hours (54) than those with less than a high school diploma (45), with 29.6% of college graduates volunteering between 100 and 499 hours per year. Only 25.1% of those with less than a high school diploma volunteered that many hours with 26.3% only volunteering between 1 and 14 hours per year. “Individuals with higher educational attainment were more likely to volunteer for multiple organizations than were those with less education” (BLS, 2010, p. 3).

Finally, college graduates were more likely than high school graduates to volunteer in more professional and management related activities, 12.7% to 4%, respectively. They were also more likely to provide tutoring, teaching, and mentoring to students than those with less education. The BLS (2010) reported, “They were much less likely to collect, prepare, distribute, or serve food or engage in general labor” (p. 4).

***Personal affiliation.*** Henderson (1981) attributed the motivation for parents getting involved in their children’s organizations to affiliation. Affiliation with a particular organization provided a motivation for volunteers based on their concern for the well-being of that organization and the people with which they affiliated (Atkinson & Birch, 1978).

Bussell and Forbes (2002) suggested that “having participated in the organization as a child or having a child involved were additional factors to consider” (p. 248) when taking into

account why people volunteer. They also reported that “volunteers are more likely to volunteer if they have a friend or family member in the organization” (p. 250).

A variety of research has been completed in the field of agricultural extension as it relates to the motivation for parents and volunteers within local 4-H clubs. Culp (1997) identified reasons for volunteers in the 4-H program to become involved. The primary motivation was “My children were 4-H members,” followed by the motivation “I enjoyed 4-H as a youth” (p. 3).

Fritz, Barbuto, Marx, Etling, and Burrow (2000) found similar results, showing that “respondents were predominantly motivated by affiliation, and, therefore, identified most strongly with volunteering because of a desire to help others, associate with youth, and to be with their children involved in 4-H” (p. 40). This is consistent with the findings of Henderson (1981).

Although the BLS (2010) did not separately report individuals with students directly involved in an organization, “parents with children under age 18 were substantially more likely to volunteer than were persons without children under 18 years of age, 34.4% compared with 23.9%” (p. 1). In addition, volunteers with children under 18 years of age volunteered primarily for educational or youth service organizations. Mothers volunteered more often than fathers, 47.4% and 38.9%, respectively.

While these studies were all focused on affiliation as a motive for volunteering, no studies were found that used affiliation as the independent variable as it applied to a motivational function. The question then is “what psychological functions motivate a member to volunteer if that member has a personal affiliation with the FFA Alumni?”

**Strategies of recruitment.** Considering the cost of marketing, any action organizations take to target their recruitment efforts is beneficial. Shields (2009) suggested the most effective recruitment technique was to identify volunteers that would be high achieving within the

organization. Shield stated, “For nonprofit organizations to operate effectively and to accomplish their goals a variety of skills and talents provided by numerous volunteers are necessary. Not only are individuals with certain traits more likely to volunteer, but particular traits may make a volunteer a more productive and desirable volunteer for the organization” (p. 144).

Clary, Snyder, and Ridge (1992) explained the importance of understanding the individuals to whom a marketing strategy is targeted. The focus of any marketing campaign should be on the individuals’ motivation to volunteer. There is a direct relationship between a person’s motivation to volunteer and the future tendency for that person to perform additional volunteer activities within an organization (Allison et al., 2002; Okun, 1994).

Randle and Dolnicar (2009) determined that volunteers that were classified as “high-contribution” (those that contributed 40 or more hours in the past 12 months) volunteered for both altruistic and egocentric reasons, providing benefits to others as well as themselves. They explained that the “balance of helping others plus benefiting oneself is likely to be a key factor in the high-contribution group being willing to keep donating more hours for a longer period, because they feel as though they also have benefitted personally in some way from their involvement” (p. 279). Arnett, German, and Hunt (2003) explained this concept as relationship marketing. For the relationship to be long lasting and vibrant, it must benefit both parties involved in the relationship.

One marketing technique that has not been used in the nonprofit sector is that of market segmentation (McDonald & Dunbar, 1998). Randle and Dolnicar (2009) described market segmentation as “the process of grouping customers within an heterogeneous market into different segments, within which individuals have similar requirements which can be fulfilled by

a specific marketing mix” (p. 272). The concept of using market segmentation focuses on the diverse nature of the non-profit market and the benefit of targeting a specific sector based on their likelihood to volunteer.

According to the BLS (2010), the best method of marketing may still be individual one-on-one contact. “Forty-four percent of volunteers became involved with the organization after being asked to volunteer, most often by someone in the organization” (p. 4). From another perspective, “individuals who were asked to volunteer were much more likely to volunteer (71%) than were those volunteers who had not been asked (29%)” (Independent Sector, 2001, Volunteering in the United States section, bullet 8). Dalton and Dignam (2007) confirm this in a study of why members join associations. They found that “word of mouth from a colleague is the number one way current members come to know about the association and the opportunity to join” (p. 26) with over 34% choosing that option as the way in which they learned about the association.

**Retention.** Recruitment of volunteers is only half the challenge. Retaining those volunteers is equally as important. Hager and Brudney (2004) reported that “charities that use volunteers to recruit other volunteers one-on-one are better able to retain volunteers” (p. 10). When the individual members involved in the organization served as spokespersons, there was a level of trust in the personal interaction. This trust was both with the individual as well as the organization he/she represented. The personal contact of a friend or member of the organization removed or diminished the perceived risk of volunteering for an organization with which the volunteer may not be familiar (Riecken, Babakus, & Yavas, 1994).

Clary and Snyder (1999) defended the functionalist theory as it related to retaining individuals in the volunteer workforce. If the goal is to maintain ongoing and sustained

participation, “volunteers whose motivational concerns are served by their participation would derive greater satisfaction than those whose concerns are not met” (p. 158). Clary et al. (1998) conducted a study to determine if volunteers would exhibit increased satisfaction from an activity if that activity specifically addressed the motivations of the volunteer. Older volunteers working in a hospital were administered the VFI to determine the functions they found important. After several months of service, volunteers were again surveyed to determine satisfaction with function-specific benefits and the degree to which they felt rewarded by their participation in volunteer activities. The results supported the hypothesis that “volunteers for whom a particular function was important and who perceived relatively greater benefits related to that function were more satisfied with their volunteerism than those who did not receive as much in the way of relevant benefits and for whom that functional dimension was not important” (Clary et al., 1998, p. 1525).

Another portion of the study by Clary et al. (1998) was designed to test volunteers’ intentions to continue volunteering when the benefits they received were aligned with the motivational functions of the volunteer. This portion of the study replicated the previous portion to provide evidence of the satisfaction of benefits, but also expanded the study to show support of the hypothesis that intentions to volunteer in the future would also be directly related to satisfaction.

The research of Puffer and Meindl (1992) showed that volunteers should be given incentives that they deem of value if the performance of the volunteers is to be ensured. By incentivizing the activity, volunteers were more likely to perform in a sustained manner. This is explained as follows:

Volunteers should be given incentives based on how their motives fit with the organization's values. This suggests that supervisors should first identify and understand volunteers' motives. With this knowledge supervisors can apply the type and amount of incentives to induce volunteers to perform appropriately, while recognizing that their attitudes may not be optimal. This may be due to incentives being able to shape behavior, but attitudes are more difficult to change. (p. 433)

Therefore, it is important for organizations to understand why people volunteer and the need to provide incentives to match the need or drive results.

The most effective retention strategy was related directly to an affiliation for or with the organization for which the individual volunteered. Commitment to the organization was dependent on whether the volunteer was connected, felt as if he/she could contribute, and could make a difference (Anderson, 2003). Identifying with a non-profit organization was directly related to the level of commitment and satisfaction of the volunteer (Tidwell, 2005).

Several studies identified the trait of altruism as the primary indicator for the motivation to continue to volunteer for an organization (Beerli, Diaz, & Martin, 2004; Faircloth, 2005; Mowen & Sujan, 2005). Anderson (2003) identified that there was a higher retention rate for students that volunteered for altruistic reasons than any other reason. Taking the opposite approach, Rubin and Thorelli (1984) found the same results. They reported that if the motivation to join was based on self-centered reasons, the volunteer was less likely to maintain a lengthy tenure.

After all the marketing is completed and individuals have been asked, the decision to join an organization and to get involved in volunteering is still the decision of the individual. So what motivates them to join? Dalton and Dignam (2007) addressed this question in a study of 18

organizations and 16,000 people in an effort to determine why they joined or did not join an organization with which they were professionally affiliated. In explaining the purpose of their study, they wrote:

The decision to join is more accurately a decision to affiliate. The term *join* implies jumping in, like a party in a pool. *Affiliate* means more than that. It incorporates the notion of shared identity. When people affiliate, they let the world around them know that they share an important quality with this group. (p. 19)

They went on to affirm that the value individuals put on their membership in an organization was dependent on their level of involvement in voluntary service. The higher the level of involvement, the higher the perceived value for joining. The level of involvement was dependent on the motivation factors for joining a group. This was consistent with Clary et al. (1992) who reported that understanding the motivation for an individual to become involved as a volunteer was an important step.

**Role of loyalty.** As important as retention was to the success of an organization, Reichheld (2003) provided an argument that an important metric was to measure member loyalty. He defined loyalty as “the willingness of someone – a customer, an employee, a friend – to make an investment or personal sacrifice in order to strengthen a relationship” (p. 2). Volunteers who were loyal were more likely to make an investment of their time or resources to develop a relationship with the organizations for which they volunteered.

The BLS (2010) reported that “44% of volunteers became involved with the organization after being asked to volunteer, most often by someone in the organization” (p. 4). Reichheld (2003) agreed with these results and provided rationale for why loyalty as he defined it was important for the growth of an organization. “Loyal customers talk up a company to their

friends, family, and colleagues. In fact, such a recommendation is one of the best indicators of loyalty because of the customer's sacrifice, if you will, in making the recommendation" (p. 2).

One tool for measuring customer loyalty was found to be the Net Promoter Score (NPS). Satmetrix (2010) explained how NPS was being utilized and could be considered the industry standard for measuring loyalty by explaining:

The growing acceptance of Net Promoter is not limited to academics and researchers. Through vehicles such as netpromoter.com and conferences held in North America and Europe, Net Promoter is quickly gaining widespread industry adoption. During Forrester Research's 2007 Marketing Forum, Forrester Chairman and CEO George F. Colony said "Net Promoter is becoming a driving force within organizations." ("Establishing a Standard," para. 4)

The NPS was developed after years of research looking for the one best predictor of customer loyalty that would result in repeat business, growth, and profitability (Owen & Brooks, 2009). Reichheld's (2003) research focused on asking dozens of questions of stakeholders, looking for a correlation between what a customer said and the customer actually did. The results of that research were explained as follows by Reichheld:

It turned out that a single survey question can, in fact, serve as a useful predictor of growth. But that question isn't about customer satisfaction or even loyalty – at least in so many words. Rather, it's about customers' willingness to recommend a product or service to someone else. In fact, in most of the industries that I studied, the percentage of customers who were enthusiastic enough to refer a friend or colleague – perhaps the strongest sign of customer loyalty – correlated directly with differences in growth rates among competitors. (p. 2)

So what is this single question to which Reichheld (2006) referred? “How likely is it that you would recommend this company to a friend or colleague?” (Reichheld, 2006, p. 18). He explained the use of NPS as follows:

Net Promoter Score (NPS) is based on the fundamental perspective that every company’s customers can be divided into three categories. Promoters . . . are loyal enthusiasts who keep buying from a company and urge their friends to do the same. Passives are satisfied but unenthusiastic customers who can be easily wooed by the competition. And detractors are unhappy customers trapped in a bad relationship. Customers can be categorized according to their answer to the question. (Reichheld, 2006, p. 19)

Respondents use a zero-to-ten rating scale with zero representing “not at all likely” and 10 meaning “extremely likely.” Promoters are those that answer with either a nine or 10. Passives are those that answer with a seven or eight. Detractors answer with a score of zero to six. The NPS is determined by subtracting the percentage of detractors from the percentage of promoters. Scores range from a high of positive 100 (100% promoters with no detractors) to a low of negative 100 (100% detractors with no promoters). Scores generally fall somewhere in the middle (Owen & Brooks, 2009).

The single question concept upon which Reichheld (2006) built the NPS does have critics that doubt the validity of the construct (Keiningham, Cooil, Andreassen, & Aksoy, 2007; Morgan & Rego 2006). Keiningham et al. (2007) were not able to replicate the results of Reichheld (2006) by using a similar methodology. The goal was to test the claim regarding NPS that a single question would be reliable as an indicator of company growth by conducting a longitudinal study of the companies to which Reichheld applied his study. The final determination was that “we find no support for the claim that Net Promoter is the ‘single most

reliable indicator of a company's ability to grow' (Netpromoter.com, 2006; Nicks, 2006)" (Keiningham et al., 2007, p. 45).

While the NPS was originally designed to be used by companies seeking a profit, it can also be used by non-profit organizations, associations, and any other service related companies concerned with customer loyalty (Satmetrix, 2010). "Every organization can grow and become more productive by generating more promoters and few detractors" (Reichheld, 2006, p. 188).

Dalton and Dignam (2007) identified the importance of the NPS and how to improve the score by comparing the level of engagement of the members of an organization with the NPS classification. Members self identified one of the following four levels of engagement to which they belonged: "governance volunteers: those who reported serving on the national or local board for the organization in the last year; committee volunteers: those who reported serving on any type of committee in the last year; ad hoc volunteers: those who participated in the value-adding work of the association by performing at least one quantifiable task, as opposed to the extended (and often uncertain) commitment of a committee in the last year; and nonparticipants: those who have not served in the last year" (Dalton & Dignam, 2007, p. 25). When comparing the levels of engagement with the NPS classification for each person, Dalton and Dignam (2007) found "the more involved a person is with a particular association, ... the more likely they are to be a promoter for the particular organization" (p. 26).

In conclusion, volunteers who are recruited by someone they know within an organization were more likely to remain with the organization. When the individual members involved in the organization served as spokespersons, there was a level of trust in the personal interaction. The personal contact of a friend or member of the organization reduced the risk of volunteering (Hager & Brudney, 2004; Riecken et al., 1994). "The Ultimate Question – *Would*

*you recommend the association to a colleague? – is the number one recruitment vehicle at an association’s disposal, and any level of involvement is the marketing catapult that can make a real difference”* (Dalton & Dignam, 2007, p. 26).

## **Chapter 3**

### **Methodology**

#### **Purposes of the Study**

The purposes of this study were to determine the demographic characteristics of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association, determine whether differences exist regarding members' motivation to join and engage themselves in the local FFA Alumni affiliate, and determine whether differences exist in members' loyalty to the FFA Alumni at the national and local levels. Knowledge of this information may provide a better understanding of current members and allow for the desired growth within the National FFA Alumni Association.

#### **Research Questions**

The research questions used to guide this study were as follows:

1. What are the demographic characteristics (gender, age, ethnicity, residence, education, occupation, income, affiliation, engagement) of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association?
2. Are there differences in the motivations for volunteering based on the demographic traits (gender, age, education, personal affiliation) of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association?
3. What are the perceived benefits to members for joining a local affiliate of the National FFA Alumni Association?
4. Are there differences in members' loyalty to the National FFA Alumni Association and the local FFA Alumni affiliate? Is there a relationship between members' loyalty to the local FFA Alumni affiliate and their level of engagement?

## **Research Design**

To accomplish the purpose, descriptive research was used in this study of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association. Gall et al., (2003) defined descriptive research as “a type of quantitative research that involves making careful descriptions of educational phenomena” (p. 290). This type of research involves reporting characteristics of one sample at one point in time. However, descriptive studies in education often result in important information about the sample, behavior, or phenomena studied.

Gall et al. (2003) go on to describe the importance of descriptive research in education, that “unless researchers first generate an accurate description of an educational phenomenon as it exists, they lack a firm basis for explaining or changing it” (p. 290). Since very little research exists to describe the membership of the FFA Alumni, why they volunteer, or the benefits to a member for joining, descriptive research was the appropriate method by which to examine these questions.

Data were gathered using survey research to determine the characteristics of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association, motivations for volunteering, loyalty to the local and national associations, and benefits of joining a local FFA Alumni affiliate. Survey research refers to studies that use surveys or questionnaires as instruments to gather data. Survey research is a very common method of collecting data for a descriptive research design (Gall et al., 2003). Dillman (2007) identified four types of potential survey errors; coverage, sampling, non-response, and measurement. Each of these errors was taken into consideration and how they were addressed is reported later in this chapter.

## **The Population and Sample**

The population of this study was the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association as garnered from the membership records for the 2009-2010 membership year. The study used a proportional stratified random sample of the membership to ensure regional representation from the national population (Gall et al., 2003) and to reduce coverage error (Dillman, 2007). Coverage error is one reason for skewed data and results when the list used for the sample does not accurately reflect the population from which the sample is drawn.

To ensure a geographically proportional stratified national sample, the four regions of the National FFA Alumni Association were used to select participants in relation to regional population. The four regions were as follows: Central (Colorado, Iowa, Kansas, Minnesota, Missouri, Montana, Nebraska, North Dakota, Oklahoma, South Dakota, Wisconsin, and Wyoming); Eastern (Connecticut, Delaware, Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Maine, Maryland, Massachusetts, Michigan, New Hampshire, New Jersey, New York, Ohio, Pennsylvania, Rhode Island, Vermont, Virginia, and West Virginia); Southern (Alabama, Arkansas, Florida, Georgia, Louisiana, Mississippi, North Carolina, Puerto Rico, South Carolina, Tennessee, and the Virgin Islands); and Western (Alaska, Arizona, California, Hawaii, Idaho, Nevada, New Mexico, Oregon, Texas, Utah, and Washington).

The number of members in each region were identified and counted as a percentage of the whole. For each region, the number of participants selected was based on the appropriate percentage. The distribution for each region was as follows: Central region – 20,385 members, 41.1%; Eastern region – 14,993 members, 30.2%; Southern region – 9,593 members, 19.4%; and Western region – 4,618 members, 9.3%. After determining the appropriate percentage for each region, names and addresses were checked for accuracy in the USPS mailing database using

Experian QAS batch processing software. After eliminating names with undeliverable addresses, no addresses, and duplicate names, the final population of 42,437 was used for the sample frame (Dillman, 2007). All information from the membership database was downloaded into an Excel spreadsheet for further sorting and randomizing.

From the sample frame, the four regions were arranged alphabetically with the central region first, followed by the eastern region, southern region, and western region. States were arranged alphabetically within each region. Within each state, affiliates were arranged in numerical order based on their national affiliate number. All members were arranged in alphabetical order by last name within an affiliate and each member in a region was assigned a number. Four groups of random numbers, each based on the number of participants required in each region, were generated by a number randomizing software found online at <http://www.graphpad.com>. Members with the corresponding numbers were identified and included in the sample.

Sampling error was also reduced by using the appropriate sample size (Dillman, 2007). Israel (2009) suggests there are multiple ways by which sample size can be determined, including “using a census for small populations, imitating a sample size of similar studies, using published tables, and applying formulas to calculate a sample size” (p. 2). For this study, sample size was determined by referring to a published table as presented in Israel (2009). This table was created based on Yamane’s (1967) formula for calculating a sample for proportion. Using a population size of 50,000 with a precision level of  $\pm 5\%$  and a confidence level of 95%, it was determined that 397 completed responses were needed. Israel (2009) suggested that “an adjustment in the sample size may be needed to accommodate a comparative analysis of subgroups” (p. 4). Sudman (as cited in Israel, 2009) suggests that a minimum of 100 responses

for each major subgroup and 20 to 50 responses for each minor subgroup is required if an analysis between subgroups is to be completed. Since the study included the comparison of multiple subgroups, it was necessary to increase the sample size. To accommodate for an expected low response rate of 40% due to the timing of the survey in the fall of the year (Dillman, 2007), the sample was increased to a final number of 1,000.

## **Instrumentation**

Measurement error can occur when a respondent does not give an accurate answer, or provides an answer that cannot be compared to any answers provided by others in the sample. There is also a chance that the respondent may not understand the question or interpret it differently than intended. To reduce measurement error (Dillman, 2007), the survey was tested for face and content validity by providing the instrument for review to a panel of experts (Gall et al., 2003). Six staff members of the National FFA Alumni Association and National FFA Organization were asked to complete the survey and provide input on the format, content, clarity, and ordering of the questions for appropriate flow. They also provided feedback on the amount of time required for completion and any problems they encountered while completing the survey. Suggestions related to specific wording and the ordering of items on the survey were considered and integrated into the survey as appropriate (Gall et al., 2003).

Non-response error is an issue if a poor response rate is achieved. To reduce non-response error, Dillman's (2007) Tailored Design Method for constructing and administering surveys was followed. The instrument included four sections related to member loyalty, motivation to volunteer, benefits for joining, and demographic characteristics. Dillman identified the first question as the most important for a successful return rate. The first question should apply to everybody, be easy, and be interesting.

Section one asked two questions to achieve a baseline Net Promoter Score (NPS). These two questions related to recommending the national and local FFA Alumni to friends. According to the recommendation of Reichheld (2006), respondents were asked to answer on an 11-point rating scale with 0 signifying “not at all likely” and 10 indicating an answer of “extremely likely.” While Reichheld’s NPS question has been used multiple times in national studies, the review of the literature provided no documentation for reliability. However, the NPS question was chosen as part of this study because of its institutional use by the National FFA Organization. A reliability analysis was conducted using Cronbach’s alpha ( $\alpha$ ) to determine internal consistency of section one. Cronbach’s alpha is commonly used when items on a survey are scored on a scale. “Tests that yield scores with a reliability of .80 or higher are sufficiently reliable for most research purposes” (Gall et al., 2003, p. 196). The results of the analysis for NPS yielded a Cronbach’s alpha coefficient of .83 ( $\alpha = .83$ ).

Section two contained 30 items on the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) as developed by Clary et al. (1998). This instrument was chosen because of its widespread use (Burns et al., 2006), its acceptance as the most applicable instrument for studies determining the motivation to volunteer (Phillips, 2005), and its validity for determining motivations to volunteer (Burns et al., 2008; Papadakis et al., 2005). The VFI has been tested for reliability and test-retest stability (Allison et al., 2002; Burns et al., 2006; Burns et al., 2008; Clary et al., 1992; Clary et al., 1998, Papadakis et al., 2005). Cronbach’s alpha coefficients typically measured above .80, with the original test by Clary et al. (1998) resulting in the following scores for each VFI scale: career, .89; enhancement, .84; social, .83; understanding, .81; protective, .81; and values, .80. Clary et al. (1998) also tested for temporal stability of the VFI by conducting a test-retest study over a period of four weeks. Results showed reliability scores between .64 and .78 on all six functions.

To determine internal reliability of this study, a Cronbach's alpha analysis was conducted on the scale for each function, yielding the following results for career,  $\alpha = .90$ ; social,  $\alpha = .83$ ; values,  $\alpha = .78$ ; enhancement,  $\alpha = .87$ ; protective,  $\alpha = .87$ ; and understanding,  $\alpha = .87$ .

The VFI was designed using a seven-point rating scale with a range of 1 representing "not at all important" and 7 representing "extremely important." In order to follow the design and intent of the original authors, the same scale was used in this study.

Section three included one open-ended question to determine specific benefits to local FFA Alumni members. The review of literature and search of the National FFA Alumni Association web site returned limited results for the benefits of a member for joining a local FFA Alumni affiliate. Respondents were asked to provide up to three benefits of joining a local FFA Alumni affiliate in an open-ended question.

Section four was used to gather demographic data of the National FFA Alumni membership. The review of literature identified demographic differences for the motivations for volunteering that applied to the National FFA Alumni Association. The variables of gender, age, education, and affiliation were included for analytical purposes as related to motivations for volunteering. Additional variables included items that were also on the survey conducted by Frank Saldana as executive director of the National FFA Alumni Association. Inclusion of these items allowed for comparison of data. Saldana's survey has been used by national FFA Alumni staff as a benchmark for demographic characteristics. The researcher, in consultation with the national FFA Alumni staff members, developed a list of demographic variables which will be beneficial for future program development and research.

## **Data Collection and Procedures**

Permission to conduct the study was obtained from the Institutional Review Board (IRB) at Kansas State University prior to the study (Appendix A). The survey was mailed to participants in the fall of the year because the membership year of the National FFA Alumni Association runs from September 1 through August 31. While the membership year closed on August 31, a final roster was not available until records were checked following the annual convention the last week of October. Any new membership rosters received after August 31 were not used as part of this study.

Data collection followed Dillman's (2007) guidelines for achieving high response rates by including five contacts with participants. The initial contact was made via a brief pre-notice letter (appendix B) on November 22. "The purpose of a pre-notice letter is to provide a positive and timely notice that the recipient will be receiving a request to help with an important study or survey" (Dillman, 2007, p. 156). This letter was personalized, signed in a contrasting ink by the researcher, and sent in an envelope with a hand-affixed postage stamp via USPS.

The second contact was mailed one week later on November 29. This mailing was comprised of an 8-page survey booklet printed on conventional legal size paper (appendix C) folded landscape, and included a self-addressed, stamped return envelope. The booklet was designed to provide a cover (page one) with the FFA Alumni logo above the title of the study. Inside the front cover (page two) was the introductory letter identifying the purpose of the study, the importance of the survey to the National FFA Alumni Association, and instructions for completing the survey along with an estimated time required for completion. Also included in this letter was notice of informed consent, right to withdraw from the study at any time, and the confidentiality notice.

Pages three through six of the booklet made up the survey. Inside the back cover (page seven) were instructions and the return address to which to send the survey when completed along with another note of confidentiality, the FFA Alumni logo, and website URL. The back cover (page eight) included art work provided by National FFA Alumni staff advertising the 40<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the National FFA Alumni Association. Each survey booklet was coded with a unique number for each participant by which the researcher could track responses. This provided an accurate list for additional follow-up contacts.

After one more week, the third contact was made. On December 7, a follow-up postcard (appendix D) was sent to all participants reminding them to complete the survey and thanking them for their participation if they had already returned the document.

On January 5, a replacement survey and cover letter (appendix E) were mailed to non-respondents reminding them to return the survey. Dillman (2007) recommended the fourth contact to be made two to four weeks after the original questionnaire. The timing of this contact would have required mailing between December 13 and 27. Because of the timing related to the Christmas and New Year's holidays, the researcher chose to delay the fourth contact until the week after the holidays.

The final contact, a third survey with cover letter (Appendix F), was made via USPS on January 24. Dillman (2007) suggests the final contact be in contrast to previous methods of contact, such as by telephone, priority mail, or special delivery mail. However, because mailing via priority or special delivery mail was cost prohibitive (Dillman, 2007), and the membership database did not include telephone numbers, Dillman suggested another option of using a mailing envelope that was different in size and look than previous mailings. While the first,

third, and fourth contacts were all mailed in standard number 10 envelopes, the fifth contact was mailed in a 9.5 inch by 12.5 inch mailing envelope.

A total of 87 unusable surveys were returned. Of that number, 78 surveys were returned due to inaccurate addresses for the recipients and were unable to be forwarded by the USPS. Seven surveys were returned because the member was deceased, and two surveys were returned with notes asking to be removed from the study. For determining response rate, the final sample size was set at 913. The initial survey mailing achieved a 35.5% response rate ( $n = 324$ ) by January 5. The follow-up procedures for the fourth and fifth contacts resulted in 75 additional responses. The researcher obtained a final response rate of 43.7% ( $n = 399$ ). To assure confidentiality of the participants, as surveys were returned, the code numbers were noted and removed prior to entering the data into the computer for analysis. At the conclusion of the data gathering process, the codes were discarded.

### **Data Analyses**

As surveys were returned, data were recorded into an Excel spreadsheet program. Descriptive and inferential statistics were used to summarize and report these data. Data from the spreadsheet were loaded into SPSS version 14.0 for Windows. To determine statistical significance, the alpha level was established a priori at 0.05 ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ).

**Research question one: What are the demographic characteristics (gender, age, ethnicity, residence, education, occupation, income, affiliation, engagement) of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association?** To answer research question one, the characteristics of the membership of the National FFA Alumni ( $n = 399$ ) were analyzed for gender, age, ethnicity, area of residence, highest level of education, occupational area, level of income, personal affiliation, and level of engagement with a local chapter. Age, hours

voluteered, and dollars donated were analyzed using frequencies, percentages, measures of central tendencies, and range. All other demographic data were analyzed using frequencies and percentages. State of residence was used to compare returned surveys with the alignment of the National FFA Alumni regions.

**Research question two: Are there differences in the motivations for volunteering based on the demographic traits (gender, age, education, affiliation) of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association?** Two sections of the survey were used to analyze this question: section two, the VFI, and section four, demographics. Each of the six motivations to volunteer, as theorized by Clary et al. (1998), was represented by five items in the VFI. The mean scores for each of the six functions of motivation served as separate dependent variables. Independent variables were the four demographic categories including gender, age, educational level, and personal affiliation. The analyses of these data are described as follows.

**Gender:** Participants were categorized by gender to determine differences in motivation to volunteer. To measure differences in values for motivations between males and females, independent sample *t*-tests were conducted. The mean scores for each of the six functions of motivation on the VFI served as dependent variables.

**Age:** To describe the relationship between age and the differences in motivations to volunteer, a Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was conducted. Age was treated as a continuous variable and the mean scores of the six functions served as the dependent variables.

**Education level:** To determine differences in motivations to volunteer based on level of education, analysis of variance (ANOVA) tests were conducted. Participants were divided into five groups based on their education level: high school graduate or less, technical school or associate's degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, or doctorate degree. The five groups

served as the independent variables and the mean scores for each of the six functions of motivation on the VFI served as separate dependent variables.

**Personal affiliation:** Since the review of the literature produced no previous research on affiliation as a variable for measuring functions of motivation, the researcher created four groups by which to compare levels of affiliation: high affiliation, moderate affiliation, slight affiliation, and no affiliation. Members of the first group were those that had the highest degree of affiliation and are referred to as “High Affiliation.” Respondents were in FFA in high school and had at least one child in FFA either currently, or in the past, or both. It was assumed by the researcher that an FFA Alumni member that had personally been in FFA and also had a child as a member of FFA would have the highest level of affiliation. The second group was the second highest affiliation level and are referred to as “Moderate Affiliation.” Members in this group were in FFA in high school, but had no children that are or were in FFA. The next group is referred to as “Slight Affiliation” and were those that were not members of FFA themselves but have a child that is, or has been in FFA, or both. The “No Affiliation” group were those that were not in FFA nor had a child that is currently or had been in FFA. Figure 2 provides an explanation of the four groups.

Level of affiliation	Response to Question 37 <sup>a</sup>	Response to Question 38 <sup>b</sup>	Option	Response to Question 39 <sup>c</sup>
High Affiliation	Yes	Yes	And/Or <sup>d</sup>	Yes
Moderate Affiliation	Yes	No	And	No
Slight Affiliation	No	Yes	And/Or <sup>d</sup>	Yes
No Affiliation	No	No	And	No

*Figure 2. Criteria for determining levels of affiliation in four groups.*

<sup>a</sup> Question 37: “Were you a member of FFA in high school?” <sup>b</sup> Question 38: “Do you have any children who are currently FFA members in high school?” <sup>c</sup> Question 39: “Have you ever had any children who were FFA members in high school?” <sup>d</sup> Groups A and C must have at least one “yes” answer to questions 38 or 39.

To test for differences in motivation to volunteer between groups, ANOVAs were conducted. The four groups served as the independent variables and the mean scores for each of the six functions of motivation on the VFI served as separate dependent variables.

**Research question three: What are the perceived benefits to members for joining a local affiliate of the National FFA Alumni Association?** The perceived benefits of joining a local FFA Alumni affiliate were assessed using qualitative methods for analyzing the data from section three of the survey. All responses provided as benefits were listed and provided to an independent researcher with experience in qualitative research to summarize and categorize into groups based on similarity. A second coder reviewed the list of responses as categorized and made changes within categories for clarification and better fit for the benefits. Finally, the researcher reviewed the list of benefits to confirm the final categorization of responses. Frequencies for responses in each subgroup were reported.

**Research question four: Are there differences in members' loyalty to the National FFA Alumni Association and the local FFA Alumni affiliate? Is there a relationship between members' loyalty to the local FFA Alumni affiliate and their level of engagement?**

This question was answered by using section one, NPS for determining member loyalty, and question 40 of section four, the four levels of member engagement. These data were analyzed in three separate tests. The first test calculated the NPS for both the National FFA Alumni Association (question 1) and the local FFA Alumni affiliate (question 2). The NPS for each was determined as directed by Reichheld (2006). The number of “promoters” was counted as those answering with either a nine or 10. The number of “passives” was counted as those answering with either a seven or eight. The number of “detractors” was counted as those answering with any number between and including zero and six. All numbers were converted to

percentages of the total of surveys completed for each question. Percentages were rounded to the nearest whole number and the percentage of detractors was subtracted from the percentage of promoters for a final NPS.

The second test determined if there was a difference in loyalty between the national and local levels. The mean scores for the national level and the local level were compared using a paired samples *t*-test.

A third test was conducted to compare the level of engagement with the NPS categories of promoter, passive, or detractor for the respondents at the local level. This study was similar to the test conducted by Dalton and Dignam (2007). Descriptive statistics were used to analyze data and reported as frequencies and percentages for each engagement level based on NPS category. Data were treated as categorical measures and a chi-square test for differences in frequencies was conducted.

## **Chapter 4**

### **Results**

This study was designed to establish baseline demographic characteristics of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association, determine if there were differences regarding members' motivation to engage themselves in the local FFA Alumni affiliate, and determine whether differences exist in members' loyalty to the FFA Alumni at the national and local levels. This chapter provides the results of the data for the research questions that guided this study.

#### **Research Questions**

The research questions used to guide this study were as follows:

1. What are the demographic characteristics (gender, age, ethnicity, residence, education, occupation, income, affiliation, engagement) of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association?
2. Are there differences in the motivations for volunteering based on the demographic traits (gender, age, education, affiliation) of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association?
3. What are the perceived benefits to members for joining a local affiliate of the National FFA Alumni Association?
4. Are there differences in members' loyalty to the National FFA Alumni Association and the local FFA Alumni affiliate? Is there a relationship between members' loyalty to the local FFA Alumni affiliate and their level of engagement?

## **Response Rates**

The population for this study was the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association as garnered from the national database. The central region made up the largest segment of the population at 41.1% ( $n = 20,385$ ). The other three regions had the following distribution: eastern region, 30.2% ( $n = 14,993$ ); southern region, 19.4%, ( $n = 9,593$ ); and western region, 9.3% ( $n = 4,618$ ).

Using a proportional stratified random sample to ensure regional representation, the four regions of the National FFA Alumni Association were used to select participants in relation to regional population. A sample size of 1,000 was determined using a published table based on the formula of Yamane (1967) as presented in Israel (2009). The sample size determined by the percentage of the population in each region resulted in the following distribution: central ( $n = 411$ ), eastern ( $n = 302$ ), southern ( $n = 194$ ), and western ( $n = 93$ ).

A total of 87 unusable surveys were returned. For determining response rate, the final sample size was set at 913. Based on a final usable sample of 913 ( $n = 913$ ), the researcher obtained a final response rate of 43.7% ( $n = 399$ ). The response rate for each region is summarized in table 1 as follows: central region, 43.6% ( $n = 174$ ); eastern region, 31.1% ( $n = 124$ ); southern region, 16.8% ( $n = 124$ ); and western region, 8.5% ( $n = 34$ ). The responses were analyzed for regional distribution using a chi-square goodness-of-fit test to ensure adequate representation for data analysis ( $\chi^2 (3, n = 399) = 2.26, p = .527$ ). The responses for each region were closely aligned with the original distribution of the proportional stratified random sample.

Table 1

*Stratification of Survey Respondents as a Sample of the National FFA Alumni Association*

Region	Regional Population	Membership Percentage	Sample Size	Surveys Returned	
	<i>n</i>	%	<i>N</i>	<i>f</i>	%
Central	20,385	41.1	411	174	43.6
Eastern	14,993	30.2	302	124	31.1
Southern	9,593	19.4	194	67	16.8
Western	4,618	9.3	93	34	8.5
Total	49,589	100	1000	399	100

**Research Question One**

The first research question sought to identify selected demographic characteristics of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association. For reporting purposes, demographic data were grouped into three categories, personal (gender, age, ethnicity, and residence), professional (education, occupation, and income), and involvement (affiliation and engagement).

**Personal characteristics.** Nearly two thirds of the participants in this study were male ( $n = 257$ , 64.4%), while females made up 35.6% ( $n = 142$ ) of the membership. The average age of respondents was 49.6 years of age ( $SD = 16.1$ ). The average age of male respondents ( $M = 52.4$ ,  $SD = 15.8$ , range = 20 to 92) was older than the average age of female respondents ( $M = 43.9$ ,  $SD = 15.5$ , range = 18 to 78). Table 2 shows the average age of participants by gender.

Table 2

*Gender Frequency and Age Characteristics of Members of the National FFA Alumni*

Gender	<i>f</i>	%	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	Range
Male	257	64.4	52.4	15.8	20 – 92
Female	142	35.6	43.9	15.5	18 – 78
Total	399	100	49.6	16.1	18 – 92

Table 3 summarizes the gender of participants identified by age ranges as categorized by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, 2010). Male members outnumbered female members in every age category except one where there were 18 female and only 10 male members represented in the 18 to 24 year-old-age group. That age group also had the lowest number of members represented with 28 respondents (7.1%). The categories with the next smallest representation were the 25 to 34 year-old-age group ( $n = 57$ , 14.3%) with 33 male members and 24 female members, and the 35 to 44 age group ( $n = 64$ , 16.0%) with 33 male members and 31 female members. Over one fourth of the members ( $n = 100$ , 25.0%) fell into the 45 to 54 age group with 61 male and 39 female members. The remaining age categories included: the 55 to 64 years old group with 80 respondents (20.0%), with 66 male and 14 female members; and the 65 and over group with 68 members (17.0%), of which 53 were male and 15 were female.

Table 3

*Gender Distribution of the National FFA Alumni by Age Range*

Age Range <sup>a</sup>	Male	Female	Total	
	f	F	f	%
18 to 24 years	10	18	28	7.1
25 to 34 years	33	24	57	14.3
35 to 44 years	33	31	64	16.0
45 to 54 years	61	39	100	25.0
55 to 64 years	66	14	80	20.0
65 years and over	53	15	68	17.0
No response <sup>b</sup>	1	1	2	0.5
Total	257	142	399	100.0

<sup>a</sup> Age ranges as identified by Bureau of Labor Statistics (2010)

<sup>b</sup> Two respondents failed to identify their age.

The data in table 4 indicate that the National FFA Alumni Association is seriously lacking in diversity. The ethnic distribution resulted in 388 respondents that identified themselves as Caucasian. The only other ethnicities represented in this sample were Asian Americans ( $n = 3$ ) and Native American/Indian ( $n = 3$ ). Five participants declined to answer this question.

Table 4

*Ethnicity of the Membership of the National FFA Alumni*

Ethnicity	F	%
African American	0	0
Asian American	3	0.8
Caucasian	388	98.4
Hispanic/Latino	0	0
Native American/Indian	3	0.8
Other	0	0
Total	394	100.0

*Note:* Five respondents failed to identify their ethnicity

The majority ( $n = 216$ , 54.5%) of FFA Alumni members identified their area of residence as rural farming as noted in table 5. An additional 84 members identified they lived in a non-farming rural area (21.2%). Less than one quarter of the membership identified their residence as suburban ( $n = 49$ , 12.4%) or urban ( $n = 47$ , 11.9%). There were three surveys returned with no response to this question.

Table 5

*Area of Residence of Members of the National FFA Alumni*

Area of Residence	<i>f</i>	%
Urban	47	11.9
Suburban	49	12.4
Rural – non-farming	84	21.2
Rural – farming	216	54.5
Total	396	100.0

*Note:* Three respondents failed to identify their area of residence.

**Professional characteristics.** For reporting purposes, the researcher labeled three demographic characteristics as professional; level of education, occupation, and annual income. Table 6 summarizes the data from these three areas. Only one respondent indicated their educational attainment at less than a high school graduate. High school graduates accounted for 31.1% of the sample ( $n = 124$ ). Members that attended a technical school or with an associate's degree accounted for 22.8% ( $n = 91$ ) of the respondents. Respondents with bachelor's degrees made up the largest percentage of those with at least a college degree ( $n = 108$ , 27.1%) with master's degrees ( $n = 65$ , 16.3%) and those with doctorate degrees ( $n = 10$ , 2.5%) comprising the fewest number of responses.

As for occupational experience, FFA Alumni members were primarily employed in a field of agriculture. The most common agriculture occupational area was farming ( $n = 103$ , 26.0%), followed closely by other agricultural-related industry ( $n = 97$ , 24.5%), and agricultural sales and/or service with 8.8% ( $n = 35$ ) of the respondents. However, the occupational area with the most responses was in the non-agriculture industry with 109 respondents (27.5%). The

results of the study indicated 52 participants (13.1%) were unemployed or not in the workforce.

Three surveys were returned with no response.

Level of income provided the most non-responses from the study participants, with 47 surveys returned with no answer to this question. Of those that replied, 42 were in the 0 to \$20,000 category (11.9%), and 72 (20.5%) were in the next category of \$20,001 to \$40,000. The most common response was the \$40,001 to \$60,000 category with 94 respondents (26.7%), followed by \$60,001 to \$80,000 with 60 respondents (17.1%), and the final two categories, \$80,001 to \$100,000 and \$100,000 or more, each reporting 42 respondents (11.9%).

Table 6

*Education, Occupation, and Income of National FFA Alumni Members*

Characteristic	f	%
Education (n = 399)		
Less than high school	1	0.3
High school graduate	124	31.1
Technical school or associate's degree	91	22.8
Bachelor's degree	108	27.1
Master's degree	65	16.3
Doctorate degree	10	2.5
Occupation (n = 396)		
Production agriculture (farming)	103	26.0
Agricultural sales and/or service	35	8.8
Other agricultural related industry	97	24.5
Non-agricultural related	109	27.5
Unemployed/not in the workforce	52	13.1
Income (n = 352)		
\$0 - \$20,000	42	11.9
\$20,001 - \$40,000	72	20.5
\$40,001 - \$60,000	94	26.7
\$60,001 - \$80,000	60	17.1
\$80,001 - \$100,000	42	11.9
\$100,001 or more	42	11.9

**Involvement characteristics.** Characteristics of involvement were analyzed by two variables, affiliation and engagement. Affiliation refers to a respondent's personal involvement or one of their child/children's involvement in a local FFA chapter. Engagement refers to activities in which the respondents actively participate with their local FFA Alumni affiliate.

Respondents indicated their affiliation with the National FFA by answering three questions related to their own or their child's membership in FFA. Nearly three fourths ( $n = 286$ , 71.7%) of the members of the National FFA Alumni Association were members of a local FFA chapter when they were in high school. Of the 286 respondents that were members, 86 had at least one child who had previously been in FFA in high school, five currently had at least one child in FFA, and 32 indicated they still had a child in FFA as well as had a child who had previously been a member.

Only 113 FFA Alumni members (28.3%) were not FFA members when they were in high school. Although not FFA members, 88 respondents still had an affiliation for the FFA through their children with 56 indicating they had at least one child who had previously been in FFA, five had at least one child currently an FFA member, and 27 indicated they had both a child currently and previously in FFA. Finally, 25 FFA Alumni members (6.3%) had no affiliation with FFA since they were not FFA members in high school and also did not have a child in FFA currently or in the past. Table 7 presents a summary of these data.

Table 7

*Affiliation Levels of National FFA Alumni Members*

Affiliation	f	%
Respondent was an FFA member ( <i>n</i> = 286, 71.7%)		
with current child/ren in FFA	5	1.3
with previous child/ren in FFA	86	21.6
with current and previous child/ren in FFA	32	8.0
with no current or previous child/ren in FFA	163	40.8
Respondent was not an FFA member ( <i>n</i> = 113, 28.3%)		
with current child/ren in FFA	5	1.3
with previous child/ren in FFA	56	14.0
with current and previous child/ren in FFA	27	6.7
with no current or previous child/ren in FFA	25	6.3
Total	399	100.0

Table 8 presents affiliation from a different perspective. There were 374 (93.7%) respondents with at least some kind of FFA affiliation. Since the review of the literature produced no previous research on affiliation as a variable for measuring functions of motivation, the researcher created four groups by which to compare levels of affiliation. Respondents considered high affiliation were those who were FFA members, and have children involved in FFA either currently, in the past, or both (*n* = 123, 30.8%). In the second level, moderate affiliation, respondents were FFA members but do not or have not had children in FFA. There were 163 (40.9%) respondents that met these criteria. A third level, slight affiliation, relates to those who were not in FFA themselves but have children that currently are and/or have been in

FFA. This described 22% ( $n = 88$ ) of the sample. Finally, the no affiliation level relates to an FFA Alumni member who was not in FFA and has no children with any current or previous FFA membership. Only 25 respondents (6.3%) fell into this category.

Table 8

*Four Levels of Affiliation of National FFA Alumni Members*

Affiliation level	Affiliation Parameters	f	%
High Affiliation	Respondent FFA member, with current and/or previous child/ren in FFA	123	30.8
Moderate Affiliation	Respondent FFA member, no current or previous child/ren in FFA	163	40.9
Slight Affiliation	Respondent non-FFA member, with current or previous child/ren in FFA	88	22.0
No Affiliation	Respondent non-FFA member, no current or previous child/ren in FFA	25	6.3
Total		399	100.0

The most direct determination of engagement was to ask FFA Alumni members to classify their engagement with the local FFA alumni affiliate. Four levels of engagement were provided and reported in table 9. The lowest level of engagement, “Inactive – not engaged in any local activities,” received 22% of the responses ( $n = 87$ ). The second level of engagement, “Informed – participate in activities locally when asked,” was the most frequent response garnering 41.4% of the responses ( $n = 164$ ). The third level of engagement, “Involved – engaged in local activities, serve on committees or as an officer,” was noted by nearly one third of the respondents (30.3%,  $n = 120$ ). The highest level of engagement, “Invested – highly engaged by representing a local affiliate at the state and/or national level,” had the fewest number of

responses at only 6.3% ( $n = 25$ ). Three surveys were returned without a response to this question.

Table 9

*Levels of Engagement of National FFA Alumni Members with a Local FFA Alumni Affiliate*

Level of Engagement	f	%
Inactive – not engaged in any local activities	87	22.0
Informed – participate in activities locally when asked	164	41.4
Involved – engaged in local activities, serve on committees or as an officer	120	30.3
Invested – highly engaged by representing a local affiliate at the state and/or national level	25	6.3
Total	396	100.0

*Note:* Three respondents failed to identify their level of engagement.

Another measure of engagement related to the investment of time and money donated to the FFA Alumni at any level. Of those responding, the average amount of time spent volunteering for the FFA Alumni at any level was 42.7 hours per year ( $n = 320$ ). The range was from zero hours to 1,600 hours by the most engaged member. With such a wide range reported additional analysis of these data report the median value of 10 hours. There were 79 surveys returned with no response to this question.

FFA Alumni members donated an average of \$337.90 per person annually for those that reported ( $n = 297$ ). The range of gifts was from \$0 to \$25,000. The response of \$25,000 can be considered an outlier and therefore additional methods of reporting of these data were considered. Analyzing the responses with the outlier removed, the average donation was \$254.58. Using measures of central tendency, the median value for the amount donated was

\$50.00. There were 102 surveys with no response to this question. Data related to hours and dollars donated are summarized in table 10.

Table 10

*Hours Volunteered and Dollars Donated by National FFA Alumni Members by Measures of Central Tendency*

Demographic	n	M	Mdn	Range
Hours volunteered <sup>a</sup>	320	42.7	10	0 – 1600
Dollars donated <sup>b</sup>	297	\$337.90	\$50.00	\$0 – \$25,000

<sup>a</sup> There were 79 non-responses to this question.

<sup>b</sup> There were 102 non-responses to this question.

When asked if they considered their local FFA Alumni affiliate active and/or engaged, the results were positive with nearly three quarters (74.6%) of the members indicating their affiliate was active ( $n = 296$ ). Only 56 members (14.1%) said their local affiliate was not active. Not all members are associated with a local affiliate ( $n = 45$ , 11.3%). Two surveys were returned with no response to this question. Table 11 presents a summary of these data.

Table 11

*Local FFA Alumni Affiliates Considered Active/Engaged by National FFA Alumni Members*

Response	F	%
Yes, local affiliate active/engaged	296	74.6
No, local affiliate not active/engaged	56	14.1
Not affiliated with local program	45	11.3
Total	397	100.0

*Note:* Two respondents did not answer this question.

Nearly half ( $n = 187$ , 47.6%) of FFA Alumni members have taken it upon themselves to recruit new members to join the FFA Alumni while 52.4% ( $n = 206$ ) have not actively recruited

others to become a member of the local FFA Alumni affiliate. These data are summarized in table 12.

Table 12

*FFA Alumni Members Actively Recruited New Members*

Response	f	%
Yes, actively recruited new members	187	47.6
No, have not actively recruited new members	206	52.4
Total	393	100.0

*Note:* Six respondents did not answer this question.

While table 12 shows that roughly half of FFA Alumni members recruit new members, when asked who encouraged them to join, the largest percentage of members indicated they decided to join the FFA Alumni themselves ( $n = 137$ , 34.7%). The most influential person encouraging members to join was the local FFA advisor ( $n = 97$ , 24.5%). Another family member was also an important person in encouraging members to join ( $n = 79$ , 20.0%). Alumni members that were not related to the respondent were credited 14.7% of the time with encouraging other members to join ( $n = 58$ ). The final option, other, was selected by 24 respondents (6.1%) as the person who encouraged them to join the FFA Alumni as reported in Table 13. Four respondents failed to identify who encouraged them to join.

Table 13

*Who Encouraged Members to Join FFA Alumni*

Response	F	%
Family member	79	20.0
Another member, non-family	58	14.7
FFA advisor	97	24.5
Decided to join myself	137	34.7
Other	24	6.1

*Note:* Four respondents failed to identify who encouraged them to join.

FFA Alumni members were also engaged in other volunteer opportunities by volunteering for an average of 2.43 ( $SD = 2.25$ ) organizations besides the FFA Alumni ( $n = 375$ ). When asked how many other organizations for which they volunteered, 55 members (14.7%) responded with zero, 73 members (19.5%) responded with one, and the most common response was two ( $n = 98$ , 26.1%). Other responses included 67 respondents (17.9%) volunteering for three organizations, 44 respondents (11.7%) volunteering for four, and 38 respondents (10.1%) volunteering for five or more. There were 24 respondents that failed to answer this question.

Table 14 summarizes the number of other organizations for which FFA Alumni members volunteer.

Table 14

*Number of Other Organizations for which FFA Alumni Members Volunteer*

Number of organizations	F	%
0	55	14.7
1	73	19.5
2	98	26.1
3	67	17.9
4	44	11.7
5 or more	38	10.1

*Note:* 24 respondents did not answer this question;  $n = 375$ ,  $M = 2.43$ ,  $SD = 2.25$

Finally, when asked what type of media they preferred as a method of communication about FFA Alumni activities, over half ( $n = 207$ , 53.6%) of the members preferred print media as their primary means of receiving information. The next most preferred method was e-mail ( $n = 147$ , 38.1%). Three other methods were less popular with respondents preferring the web page ( $n = 15$ , 3.9%), other media ( $n = 11$ , 2.8%), and social media ( $n = 6$ , 1.6%). Thirteen responses were left blank for this question. Table 15 reports these data.

Table 15

*Preferred Method of Communication about FFA Alumni Information*

Method	F	%
E-mail	147	38.1
Print media	207	53.6
Social media	6	1.6
Web page	15	3.9
Other	11	2.8
Total	386	100.0

*Note:* 13 respondents failed to identify their preferred method of communication.

### **Research Question Two**

Research question two asked if there were differences in the motivations for volunteering based on the demographic characteristics of the members in the National FFA Alumni Association. The motivations for volunteering were measured using the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI) developed by Clary et al. (1998). The VFI measured six functions in a 30-item instrument related to the motivation to volunteer, including values, understanding, social, career, protective, and enhancement. Survey participants were asked to rate themselves on a seven-point rating scale for how important (1 = not at all important to 7 = extremely important) each item was as it related to their motivation to volunteer.

The motivational function of values relates to a personal belief based on humanitarian concerns. A person motivated by values is concerned for the welfare of those for whom they are volunteering. Five statements established the score for the values function. The number for each statement corresponds to the item number in the survey used in this study, followed by the mean values for each statement: 5. “I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself,” ( $M = 5.54$ ,

$SD = 1.30$ ); 10. “I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving,” ( $M = 5.71$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ); 18. “I feel compassion toward people in need,” ( $M = 5.45$ ,  $SD = 1.36$ ); 21. “I feel it is important to help others,” ( $M = 6.12$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ); 24. “I can do something or a cause that is important to me,” ( $M = 5.75$ ,  $SD = 1.17$ ). The grand mean for the values function was 5.72 ( $SD = .90$ ) as indicated in table 16. The mean score for one statement, “I feel it is important to help others,” ( $M = 6.12$ ) was found to be rated significantly higher than the next closest mean score ( $M = 5.75$ ), using a paired samples  $t$ -test,  $\alpha = .05$ , ( $t(389) = 6.405$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The respondents in this study expressed a strong belief that helping others is important and have a concern for those for whom they volunteer. As FFA Alumni members, they are concerned about the FFA chapter for whom they volunteer and believe it is important to help students. The values function was the highest rated among the six motivational functions.

Table 16

*Mean Scores for FFA Alumni Members’ Motivation to Volunteer Related to the Values Function*

Item #	Function Statement	Mode	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
5	I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself	7	5.54	1.30
10	I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving	6	5.71	1.30
18	I feel compassion toward people in need	6	5.45	1.36
21	I feel it is important to help others	7	6.12 <sup>a</sup>	1.07
24	I can do something for a cause that is important to me	6	5.75	1.17
Grand Mean ( $n = 390$ )			5.72	0.90

*Note:* Scale for responses: 1 = not at all important; 4 = neutral; 7 = extremely important; nine respondents failed to complete all questions related to values and were not used in calculating the mean

<sup>a</sup> This statement was found to be significantly higher than the next highest mean score ( $p < .001$ ).

The second function, understanding, allows volunteers to seek new information or skills for their own personal gain and provides an opportunity for them to apply their new or

previously held knowledge and skills to those with whom they are working. The five items for the understanding function as reported in table 17 were: 14. “I can learn more about the cause for which I am working,” ( $M = 4.95$ ,  $SD = 1.43$ ); 16. “Volunteering allows me to gain a new perspective on things,” ( $M = 5.25$ ,  $SD = 1.41$ ); 20. “Volunteering lets me learn things through direct hands on experience,” ( $M = 5.17$ ,  $SD = 1.43$ ); 27. “I can learn how to deal with a variety of people,” ( $M = 4.98$ ,  $SD = 1.48$ ); 32. “I can explore my own strengths,” ( $M = 4.72$ ,  $SD = 1.64$ ). The grand mean for the understanding function was 5.01 ( $SD = 1.20$ ). FFA Alumni members ranked this function as second in importance as a motivation to volunteer, indicating a desire to share their knowledge and expertise with others. They also see the importance of gaining new knowledge and skills, and a new perspective of their surroundings.

Table 17

*Mean Scores for FFA Alumni Members’ Motivation to Volunteer Related to the Understanding Function*

Item #	Function Statement	Mode	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
14	I can learn more about the cause for which I am working	5	4.95	1.43
16	Volunteering allows me to gain a new perspective on things	6	5.25	1.41
20	Volunteering lets me learn things through direct, hands on experience	6	5.17	1.43
27	I can learn how to deal with a variety of people	6	4.98	1.48
32	I can explore my own strengths	5	4.72	1.64
Grand Mean ( $n = 389$ )			5.01	1.20

*Note:* Scale for responses: 1 = not at all important; 4 = neutral; 7 = extremely important; ten respondents failed to complete all questions related to understanding and were not used in calculating the mean.

The third motivational function relates to a desire to expand one’s social circles or join new social groups, as well as filling the need to fit in or adapt to the social pressure applied by

those in a particular social group. The five items comprising the social section were: 4. My friends volunteer, ( $M = 4.21$ ,  $SD = 1.68$ ); 6. “People I’m close to want me to volunteer,” ( $M = 4.27$ ,  $SD = 1.77$ ); 8. “People I know share an interest in community service,” ( $M = 5.21$ ,  $SD = 1.37$ ); 19. “Others with whom I am close place a high value on community service,” ( $M = 4.77$ ,  $SD = 1.59$ ); 25. “Volunteering is an important activity to the people I know best,” ( $M = 4.58$ ,  $SD = 1.56$ ). The grand mean for the social function was 4.62 ( $SD = 1.23$ ). The social function generated the third highest mean score indicating an interest in meeting expectations of their friends and participating in social activities with their friends as important functions for FFA Alumni members. Using a paired samples  $t$ -test, it was determined that one statement, “People I know share an interest in community service,” ( $M = 5.21$ ) was rated significantly higher by respondents than the next highest statement ( $M = 4.77$ ); ( $t(389) = 6.266$ ,  $p < .001$ ). FFA Alumni members in this study indicated a desire to be involved in community service as a major motivation to volunteer. They also found it important to volunteer if their friends or those with whom they associated volunteered. These data are summarized in table 18.

Table 18

*Mean Scores for FFA Alumni Members' Motivation to Volunteer Related to the Social Function*

Item #	Function Statement	Mode	M	SD
4	My friends volunteer	5	4.21	1.68
6	People I'm close to want me to volunteer	4	4.27	1.77
8	People I know share an interest in community service	6	5.21 <sup>a</sup>	1.37
19	Others with whom I am close place a high value on community service	5	4.77	1.59
25	Volunteering is an important activity to the people I know best	5	4.58	1.56
Grand Mean ( <i>n</i> = 389)			4.62	1.23

*Note:* Scale for responses: 1 = not at all important; 4 = neutral; 7 = extremely important; ten respondents failed to complete all questions related to social and were not used in calculating the mean.

<sup>a</sup>This statement was found to be significantly higher than the next highest mean score ( $p < .001$ ).

The results of the career motivational function is shown in table 19 and relates to building career-related skills, relationships, and contacts. The following questions related to the career motivational function: 3. "Volunteering can help me to get my foot in the door at a place where I would like to work," ( $M = 3.60$ ,  $SD = 2.06$ ); 12. "I can make new contacts that might help my business or career," ( $M = 3.98$ ,  $SD = 1.91$ ); 17. "Volunteering allows me to explore different career options," ( $M = 3.54$ ,  $SD = 1.81$ ); 23. "Volunteering will help me to succeed in my chosen profession," ( $M = 3.57$ ,  $SD = 1.83$ ); 30. "Volunteering experience will look good on my resume," ( $M = 3.61$ ,  $SD = 1.99$ ). The grand mean for the career function was 3.68 ( $SD = 1.62$ ). FFA Alumni members rated the career function as one of the two lowest functions, with all five mean scores below the neutral value of 4.0. Alumni members place a low level of importance on using volunteer activities as a means by which to further their career or improve their resume.

Table 19

*Mean Scores for FFA Alumni Members' Motivation to Volunteer Related to the Career Function*

Item #	Function Statement	Mode	M	SD
3	Volunteering can help me to get my foot in the door at a place where I would like to work	1	3.60	2.06
12	I can make new contacts that might help my business or career	4	3.98	1.91
17	Volunteering allows me to explore different career options	4	3.54	1.81
23	Volunteering will help me to succeed in my chosen profession	4	3.57	1.83
30	Volunteering experience will look good on my resume	1	3.61	1.99
Grand Mean ( <i>n</i> = 389)			3.68	1.62

*Note:* Scale for responses: 1 = not at all important; 4 = neutral; 7 = extremely important; ten respondents failed to complete all questions related to careers and were not used in calculating the mean.

The protective function addresses a person's need to reduce guilt, concentrate on one's personal problems, or deal with individual inner struggles. If people view themselves as more fortunate than others, they may feel a need to fulfill an inner sense of responsibility to help bring others up to their status. The five items for the protective function were 9. "No matter how bad I've been feeling, volunteering helps me to forget about it," ( $M = 4.52$ ,  $SD = 1.69$ ); 11. "By volunteering I feel less lonely," ( $M = 3.65$ ,  $SD = 1.90$ ); 13. "Doing volunteer work relieves me of some of the guilt over being more fortunate than others," ( $M = 3.26$ ,  $SD = 1.68$ ); 22. "Volunteering helps me work through my own personal problems," ( $M = 3.47$ ,  $SD = 1.73$ ); 26. "Volunteering is a good escape from my own troubles," ( $M = 3.41$ ,  $SD = 1.78$ ). The grand mean for the protective function was 3.68 ( $SD = 1.42$ ). The protective function, along with career, was rated lowest by FFA Alumni members as a function of their motivation to volunteer as shown in table 20. However, one item on the survey, "No matter how bad I've been feeling, volunteering helps me

to forget about it," generated a mean score of 4.52. Using a paired samples *t*-test, this statement was found to be significantly higher than the mean score of the next closest statement ( $M = 3.65$ ); ( $t(393) = 9.688, p < .001$ ). FFA Alumni members may not feel the need to escape their own troubles or reduce guilt, but do find it comforting when working alongside others in a volunteer activity.

Table 20

*Mean Scores for FFA Alumni Members' Motivation to Volunteer Related to the Protective Function*

Item #	Function Statement	Mode	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
9	No matter how bad I've been feeling, volunteering helps me to forget about it	5	4.52 <sup>a</sup>	1.69
11	By volunteering I feel less lonely	4	3.65	1.90
13	Doing volunteer work relieves me of some of the guilt over being more fortunate than others	4	3.26	1.68
22	Volunteering helps me work through my own personal problems	4	3.47	1.73
26	Volunteering is a good escape from my own troubles	4	3.41	1.78
Grand Mean ( <i>n</i> = 390)			3.68	1.42

*Note:* Scale for responses: 1 = not at all important; 4 = neutral; 7 = extremely important; nine respondents failed to complete all questions related to protective and were not used in calculating the mean.

<sup>a</sup>This statement was found to be significantly higher than the next highest mean score ( $p < .001$ ).

The enhancement function is related to the protective function in that both relate to fulfilling a need of the ego. The enhancement function is focused on the positive desire of personal growth and enhancing the self esteem of the volunteer. For enhancement, the five items were, 7. "Volunteering makes me feel important," ( $M = 4.39, SD 1.87$ ); 15. "Volunteering increases my self-esteem," ( $M = 4.49, SD = 1.68$ ); 28. "Volunteering makes me feel needed," ( $M = 4.44, SD = 1.74$ ); 29. "Volunteering makes me feel better about myself," ( $M = 4.62, SD =$

1.69); 31. “Volunteering is a way to make new friends,” ( $M = 5.08$ ,  $SD = 1.49$ ). The grand mean for the enhancement function was 4.60 ( $SD = 1.37$ ). These data are summarized in table 21. The enhancement function was very similar in mean score with the social function for the third highest motivation for FFA Alumni members, providing opportunities for personal growth or fulfillment. Using a paired samples  $t$ -test, it was determined that one statement in this section, “Volunteering is a way to make new friends,” generated a mean score ( $M = 5.08$ ) significantly higher than the next highest mean score of 4.62 ( $t(388) = 5.552$ ,  $p < .001$ ). Making new friends is an important part of volunteering for FFA Alumni members.

Table 21

*Mean Scores for FFA Alumni Members’ Motivation to Volunteer Related to the Enhancement Function*

Item #	Function Statement	Mode	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
7	Volunteering makes me feel important	4	4.39	1.87
15	Volunteering increases my self-esteem	5	4.49	1.68
28	Volunteering makes me feel needed	5	4.44	1.74
29	Volunteering makes me feel better about myself	4, 5, 6 <sup>a</sup>	4.62	1.69
31	Volunteering is a way to make new friends	6	5.08 <sup>b</sup>	1.49
Grand Mean ( $n = 387$ )			4.60	1.37

*Note:* Scale for responses: 1 = not at all important; 4 = neutral; 7 = extremely important; twelve respondents failed to complete all questions related to enhancement and were not used in calculating the mean.

<sup>a</sup> All three ratings received 89 responses

<sup>b</sup> This statement was found to be significantly higher than the next highest mean score ( $p < .001$ ).

Independent variables by which to compare differences in motivation were the demographic characteristics of gender, age, level of education, and personal affiliation with a

local FFA chapter. Each demographic trait was evaluated independently and the results of those analyses are explained in each section as follows.

**Gender.** Female and male FFA Alumni members' responses to the survey were significantly different in the importance they placed on volunteering in all six motivational functions, using independent samples *t*-tests. While the top two functions for both females and males were the same, values and understanding, there was a significant difference ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) in the importance they placed on those functions with females scoring both functions with a higher level of importance. The mean score for females for the values function was 6.04 ( $SD = .76$ ), while males had a mean score of 5.54 ( $SD = .92$ ); ( $t(388) = 5.841, p < .001$ ). In relation to their male counterparts, females scored higher in values and show a much stronger motivation for caring about those for whom they volunteer and have more compassion for people in need.

The second highest function for both females and males was understanding, with a mean score for females of 5.46 ( $SD = 1.06$ ) and males of 4.76 ( $SD = 1.20$ ); ( $t(387) = 5.756, p < .001$ ). Females scored higher in the understanding function, indicating a stronger desire to learn new things, share with others, and seek new perspectives from others.

For the next two functions, the difference between the means scores between females and males was significant. The mean scores for the social function were as follows: for females ( $M = 4.88, SD = 1.21$ ); and males ( $M = 4.47, SD = 1.21$ ); ( $t(387) = 3.199, p = .001$ ). The mean scores for the enhancement function were as follows: for females ( $M = 5.03, SD = 1.30$ ); and males ( $M = 4.37, SD = 1.36$ ); ( $t(385) = 4.689, p < .001$ ). Female FFA Alumni members were more motivated to volunteer as a way to share their knowledge and skills with others, and to participate in social activities than male members.

The final two functions for both genders were of equal value as motivations to volunteer, but the importance placed on each function was stronger for females than males. The mean scores for the career function were as follows: for females ( $M = 4.08$ ,  $SD = 1.61$ ); and males ( $M = 3.45$ ,  $SD = 1.59$ ); ( $t(387) = 3.774$ ,  $p < .001$ ). The mean scores for the protective function were as follows: for females ( $M = 4.06$ ,  $SD = 1.33$ ); and males ( $M = 3.47$ ,  $SD = 1.42$ ); ( $t(388) = 4.002$ ,  $p < .001$ ). While females placed a stronger level of importance on protective and career motivations for volunteering, mean scores for both genders was at or below the neutral level of importance. Table 22 presents the results of these data as well as the results of the independent samples  $t$ -tests and  $p$ -values.

Table 22

*Mean Values, Standard Deviations, and Independent Samples t-test Results of Males and Females on their Motivations to Volunteer*

VFI Scale	Female			Male			<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>n</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>		
Values	140	6.04	.76	250	5.54	.92	5.841	.000**
Understanding	140	5.46	1.06	249	4.76	1.20	5.756	.000**
Social	140	4.88	1.21	249	4.47	1.21	3.199	.001**
Career	140	4.08	1.61	249	3.45	1.59	3.774	.000**
Protective	140	4.06	1.33	250	3.47	1.42	4.002	.000**
Enhancement	139	5.03	1.30	248	4.37	1.36	4.689	.000**

*Note:* Scale for responses: 1 = not at all important; 4 = neutral; 7 = extremely important

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

**Age.** Members of the National FFA Alumni Association vary from 18 to 92 years of age. To describe the relationship of age and the differences in motivations to volunteer, a Pearson Product Moment Correlation analysis was conducted. Age was treated as a continuous variable and correlated between the six functions of motivation: career, social, values, enhancement,

protective, and understanding. The analysis found in table 23 indicated significant negative correlations ( $\alpha = .05$ ) in four functions: career ( $r = -.308$ ), understanding ( $r = -.187$ ), values ( $r = -.153$ ), and enhancement ( $r = -.125$ ). The remaining functions also had negative correlations, social ( $r = -.070$ ) and protective ( $r = -.043$ ) but were not significant. As FFA Alumni members age, the importance they place on the career, understanding, values, and enhancement functions diminished significantly. However, younger members found volunteering important for improving their career skills, gaining new knowledge, addressing inner values for service, and enhancing their self esteem and personal growth.

Table 23

*Pearson Product Moment Correlations (r) Between Age and Functions of Motivation to Volunteer*

Characteristic	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
1. Age	-	-.308**	-.070	-.153**	-.125*	-.043	-.187**
2. Career		-	.527	.250	.655	.658	.594
3. Social			-	.496	.608	.594	.595
4. Values				-	.415	.376	.592
5. Enhancement					-	.812	.705
6. Protective						-	.649
7. Understanding							-

\* $p < 0.05$

\*\* $p < 0.01$

**Education.** To determine differences in motivations to volunteer based on level of education, participants were divided into five groups based on their education level: high school graduate or less, technical school or associate's degree, bachelor's degree, master's degree, or doctorate degree. The independent variable was the education level composed of five groups.

The mean scores for each of the six functions of motivation on the VFI served as separate dependent variables. Respondents were compared for differences in motivations to volunteer. An ANOVA was run for each of the six functions as dependent variables with the education levels as the independent variable. The data analyses revealed only one significant difference ( $\alpha = .05$ ) in the protective function ( $F(4, 385) = 4.010, p = .003$ ). The remaining functions yielded no significant differences: social ( $p = .209$ ), values ( $p = .678$ ), enhancement ( $p = .272$ ), careers ( $p = .217$ ), and understanding ( $p = .559$ ). The results are displayed in table 24. The ANOVA for the protective function identified a significant difference among educational levels. To identify where the difference existed, a post-hoc Tukey test was conducted.

To further isolate the difference in levels of importance in the protective function, a post-hoc Tukey test was conducted and the results are reported in table 25. For the protective function, respondents in the bachelor's degree subgroup ( $M = 3.40, SD = 1.40$ ) were significantly lower in mean score from the high school or less subgroup ( $M = 4.07, SD = 1.43$ ). The remaining subgroups, technical school or associate's degree ( $M = 3.58, SD = 1.42$ ), master's degree ( $M = 3.65, SD = 1.32$ ), and doctorate degree ( $M = 3.04, SD = 1.11$ ) showed no significant difference among any other groups. Respondents with bachelor's degrees rated the protective function lower than those that were high school graduates or less, indicating less need to address their own personal issues as a way of dealing with individual inner struggles. Both groups rated the function as neutral, or less important, on the seven point rating scale as a motivation to volunteer.

Table 24

*ANOVA Summary Table for Differences in Motivations to Volunteer by Levels of Education*

Function	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Values	4	.471	.579	.678
Understanding	4	1.082	.749	.559
Social	4	2.209	1.477	.209
Career	4	3.797	1.448	.217
Protective	4	7.833	4.010	.003 **
Enhancement	4	2.434	1.293	.272

\*\* p&lt;0.01

Table 25

*Post-hoc Tukey Test to Determine Difference in the Protective Function Motivation to Volunteer for Education Levels*

Education Levels	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
High School or Less	121	4.07 <sup>a</sup>	1.43
Technical School or Associate's Degree	89	3.58	1.42
Bachelor's Degree	106	3.40 <sup>a</sup>	1.40
Master's Degree	65	3.65	1.32
Doctorate Degree	9	3.04	1.11

*Note:* Scale for responses: 1 = not at all important; 4 = neutral; 7 = extremely important<sup>a</sup> *p* = .003

**Affiliation.** Four affiliation levels, high affiliation, moderate affiliation, slight affiliation, and no affiliation, were compared for differences in motivations to volunteer. High affiliation members were in FFA in high school and had a student either currently or previously in FFA. Moderate affiliation members were in high school but did not have children currently or

previously in FFA. Slight affiliation members were not in FFA themselves, but were affiliated with FFA through their children's membership. No affiliation members were not in FFA nor had children in FFA. An ANOVA was run for each of the six functions with the affiliation levels as the independent variable. These tests identified only one significant difference ( $\alpha = .05$ ) in the career function ( $F(3, 385) = 6.262, p < .001$ ). The remaining functions yielded no significant differences: social ( $p = .769$ ), values ( $p = .184$ ), enhancement ( $p = .063$ ), protective ( $p = .272$ ), and understanding ( $p = .079$ ). Table 26 summarizes these data. The ANOVA for the career function identified a significant difference within affiliation levels.

To determine which groups had different levels of importance in the career function, a post-hoc Tukey test was conducted and is reported in table 27. For the career function, the no affiliation group ( $M = 2.85, SD = 1.82$ ) was significantly lower in mean score from the moderate affiliation group ( $M = 4.05, SD = 1.55$ ). The remaining groups, high affiliation ( $M = 3.48, SD = 1.64$ ) and slight affiliation ( $M = 3.48, SD = 1.53$ ) showed no significant difference between any other groups. FFA Alumni members that have no affiliation to the FFA chapter, place significantly lower importance on careers than those that were in FFA in high school but do not have children in the FFA, either currently or in the past. However, both groups scored the careers function at or below the neutral level of importance as a motivation for volunteering.

Table 26

*ANOVA Summary Table for Differences in Motivations to Volunteer by Levels of Affiliation*

Function	<i>df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Values	3	1.308	1.623	.184
Understanding	3	3.256	2.282	.079
Social	3	.571	.378	.769
Career	3	15.850	6.262	.000**
Protective	3	2.625	1.307	.272
Enhancement	3	4.584	2.455	.063

\*\* p&lt;0.01

Table 27

*Post-hoc Tukey Test to Determine Difference in the Career Function Motivation to Volunteer for Affiliation Levels*

Affiliation Groups	<i>N</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
High Affiliation	119	3.48	1.64
Moderate Affiliation	160	4.05 <sup>a</sup>	1.55
Slight Affiliation	85	3.48	1.53
No Affiliation	25	2.85 <sup>a</sup>	1.82

*Note:* Scale for responses: 1 = not at all important; 4 = neutral; 7 = extremely important<sup>a</sup> *p* = .003**Research Question Three**

Research question three sought to determine what FFA Alumni members perceived were the benefits for joining a local affiliate. To address this issue, one question in section three asked members to identify three benefits they personally received by joining the local FFA Alumni affiliate. There were 179 members that provided three answers to this question, 32 respondents

provided two answers, 20 respondents provided only one benefit, and 168 members chose not to answer this question.

A total of 621 responses were listed and provided to an independent researcher with experience in qualitative research to summarize and categorize into groups based on similarity. A second coder reviewed the list of responses as categorized and made changes within categories for clarification and better fit for the benefits. Finally, the researcher reviewed the list of benefits to confirm the final categorization of responses. After analysis, the list of benefits was divided into three broad categories, (a) social/personal benefits, (b) opportunities for service, and (c) connectedness. Each of these categories was further divided into subcategories. The social/personal category had four subcategories: personal growth/satisfaction/fulfillment ( $n = 119$ ), personal friendships/relationships ( $n = 67$ ), giving back to FFA/continuing FFA tradition ( $n = 34$ ), and fun/social activities ( $n = 16$ ). The opportunities for service category generated four subcategories: helping kids, supporting youth ( $n = 113$ ); supporting the local program/chapter/school ( $n = 65$ ); helping the community, giving back to others ( $n = 62$ ); and promoting/supporting agriculture ( $n = 26$ ). The connectedness category had three subcategories: connections with others/networking ( $n = 55$ ); connection with FFA chapter activities/own children ( $n = 34$ ); and connection with community ( $n = 30$ ). Table 28 summarizes frequencies for each category and subcategory.

Table 28

*Summary of Benefits of Joining a Local FFA Alumni Affiliate*

Category	<i>f</i>
Social/Personal Benefits (n = 236)	
Personal Growth/Satisfaction/Fulfillment	119
Personal Friendships/Relationships	67
Giving Back to FFA/Continuing FFA Tradition	34
Fun, Social Activities	16
Opportunities for Service (n = 266)	
Helping Kids, Supporting Youth	113
Supporting the Local Program/Chapter/School	65
Helping Community, Giving Back to Others	62
Promoting/Supporting Agriculture	26
Connectedness (n = 119)	
Connection with Others/Networking	55
Connection with FFA Chapter Activities/Own Children	34
Connection with Community	30

*Note:* 179 respondents provided three answers to this question; 32 respondents provided two answers; 20 respondents provided one answer; 168 members chose not to answer this question; total responses (*n* = 621)

**Research Question Four**

Research question four asked if there were differences in members' loyalty to the national association and the local affiliate, and if the loyalty to the local affiliate was related to the level of engagement of the member. Data to answer this question were garnered from two sections of the survey. Loyalty to the national association or the local affiliate was determined by using two Net Promoter Score (NPS) questions following the guidelines of Reichheld (2006).

Participants were asked to rate themselves on an 11 point rating scale for how likely (0 = not at all likely to 10 = extremely likely) they were to recommend the National FFA Alumni Association and a local FFA Alumni affiliate to a friend or colleague. Data for the second part of this question, level of engagement, were garnered from question 40, “To what degree would you classify your engagement with the local FFA Alumni?”

To evaluate and fully understand the meaning of the scores derived from the NPS question, a company or organization must be able to put the score in context with other organizations that are similar (Satmetrix, 2011). Since NPS is primarily a tool used by commercial industry and retail business, no comparative scores could be located on the NPS website. However, Satmetrix provides a general explanation of scores, reporting that the most efficient companies will often have scores in excess of 50, while average companies may have scores in the five to 10 point range. The primary means of evaluating the NPS for the FFA Alumni is to compare the scores of the national and local levels.

To determine if there were differences in loyalty, data were analyzed in three separate tests. The first analysis yielded the NPS for both the National FFA Alumni Association as well as the local FFA Alumni affiliate as directed by Reichheld (2006). For the National FFA Alumni Association ( $n = 387$ ), the NPS was calculated to be 19. There were 177 promoters (46%), or those answering with either a nine or 10. The number of passives were 104 (27%), those answering with either a seven or eight. Detractors, those answering with any number between and including zero and six, accounted for 106 (27%) of the responses. The percentage of detractors was subtracted from the percentage of promoters for a final NPS of 19.

As for loyalty to a local FFA Alumni affiliate ( $n = 382$ ), the NPS was 41. There were 222 promoters (58%), or those answering with either a nine or 10. The number of passives were

97 (25%), those answering with either a seven or eight. Detractors, those answering with any number between and including zero and six, accounted for 66 (17%) of the responses. The percentage of detractors was subtracted from the percentage of promoters. Table 29 summarizes the frequencies and percentages of responses that were used to calculate the NPS for both the National FFA Alumni Association and the local FFA Alumni affiliate. Table 30 illustrates the calculation used to determine NPS for both national and local levels.

Based on these scores, FFA Alumni members are much more loyal to the local FFA Alumni affiliate than to the National FFA Alumni Association. This may be expected because members are engaged at the local level and may not be aware of activities or events sponsored by state or national associations.

Table 29

*Frequencies and Percentages of Responses for NPS for National and Local FFA Alumni*

Response	National		Local	
	f	%	f	%
0	1	0.3	5	1.3
1	4	1.0	3	0.8
2	12	3.1	5	1.3
3	15	3.9	6	1.6
4	9	2.3	6	1.6
5	37	9.6	24	6.0
6	28	7.2	17	4.4
Detractors	106	27.4 <sup>a</sup>	66	17.1 <sup>a</sup>
7	40	10.3	44	11.5
8	64	16.5	53	13.9
Passives	104	26.8 <sup>a</sup>	97	25.2 <sup>a</sup>
9	51	13.2	61	15.7
10	126	32.6	161	41.9
Promoters	177	45.8 <sup>a</sup>	222	57.7 <sup>a</sup>
Total <sup>b</sup>	387	100	385	100

*Note.* Scale for responses, 0 = not at all likely; 10 = extremely likely<sup>a</sup> All percentages are rounded to the nearest whole number for determining NPS<sup>b</sup> There were 12 non-responses for the national level and 14 non-responses for the local level.

Table 30

*Percentages of Responses for Promoters and Detractors to Determine NPS for National and Local FFA Alumni*

NPS Category	National %	Local %
Promoters (score of 9 or 10 on NPS question)	46	58
Detractors (score of 0 through 6 on NPS question)	27	17
NPS (Promoters minus Detractors)	19	41

*Note:*  $n_{\text{national}} = 387$ ;  $n_{\text{local}} = 385$

The discrepancy of the two NPS values suggested there was a difference in the loyalty of FFA Alumni members between the National FFA Alumni Association and the local FFA Alumni affiliate. To measure the difference, the mean scores for the national ( $M = 7.68$ ,  $SD = 2.40$ ) and local ( $M = 8.23$ ,  $SD = 2.23$ ) levels were compared using a paired samples  $t$ -test. The data in Table 31 shows a significant difference ( $\alpha = .05$ ) in loyalty between national and local levels. Results of the  $t$ -test confirm a significant difference for National FFA Alumni Members showing more loyalty to the local affiliate than the national association ( $t(384) = 6.115$ ,  $p < .001$ ).

Table 31

*Difference in NPS Measure of Loyalty Between National and Local FFA Alumni, Paired Samples t-test*

NPS, national		NPS, local		<i>t</i>	<i>df</i>	<i>p</i>
<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>			
7.68	2.40	8.23	2.23	6.115	384	.000**

\*\*  $p < 0.01$

To determine if there was a difference in loyalty at the local level based on level of engagement, the format of a study by Dalton and Dignam (2007) was followed. FFA Alumni members were asked to identify their level of engagement with the local FFA Alumni affiliate.

Four levels of engagement were compared with the three NPS categories assigned to members.

To determine if there was a difference in the loyalty of a member (NPS category) based on the level of engagement, the percentages of responses in each level of engagement were compared.

The results of the comparisons indicate that the more engaged the member, the more likely they were to be a promoter. In the promoter category, there were 68.0% of the invested group, 77.2% of the involved group, 53.1% of the informed group, and 36.1% of the inactive group. The opposite can be found in the detractor category with only 4.0% invested, 6.1% involved, 13.1% informed, and 43.4% inactive. The passive category was mixed at 28.0% invested, 16.7% involved, 33.8% informed, and 20.5% inactive. Table 32 illustrates the results of these data.

Table 32

*Comparison of Levels of Engagement and NPS Categories at the Local Level*

NPS Category	Inactive % (n)	Informed % (n)	Involved % (n)	Invested % (n)
Promoter (9 or 10)	36.1	53.1	77.2	68.0
<i>n</i>	(30)	(85)	(88)	(17)
Passive (7 or 8)	20.5	33.8	16.7	28.0
<i>n</i>	(17)	(54)	(19)	(7)
Detractor (0 to 6)	43.4	13.1	6.1	4.0
<i>n</i>	(36)	(21)	(7)	(1)
Total	100	100	100	100
<i>n</i>	(83)	(160)	(114)	(25)

*Note.* To read this table, compare percentages in each category horizontally. The more active the member, the more likely they are to be a promoter. Invested and involved categories have a significantly higher percentage of promoters than the inactive category. However, the more inactive a member is, the more likely they are to be a detractor. The inactive category has significantly more detractors than the informed, involved, or invested categories.

A chi-square test was conducted to determine if the differences in the levels of engagement were significant across NPS categories. The data in table 33 indicate that the

variance in levels of engagement is significant with inactive members more likely to be a detractor than invested members, and invested and involved members more likely to be promoters of the local FFA Alumni affiliate ( $\chi^2$  (6, n = 382) = 68.872, p < 0.001).

Table 33

*Pearson's Chi-Square Test on Levels of Engagement and NPS Categories*

	Value	df	p
Pearson Chi-Square	68.872	6	.000**
Likelihood Ratio	62.736	6	.000**
Linear-by-Linear Association	46.336	1	.000**

*Note:* n = 382

\*\* p<0.01

## **Chapter 5**

### **Summary, Conclusions, Implications, Discussion, and Recommendations**

The purpose of this chapter is to summarize and explain the results of the data analyses, discuss the conclusions and implications of the findings, and provide recommendations for future application and research. These discussions are structured to address each research question.

#### **Purposes of the Study**

The purposes of this study were to determine the demographic characteristics of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association, determine whether differences exist regarding members' motivation to join and engage themselves in the local FFA Alumni affiliate, and determine whether differences exist in members' loyalty to the FFA Alumni at the national and local levels. Knowledge of this information may provide a better understanding of current members and allow for the desired growth within the National FFA Alumni Association.

#### **Research Questions**

The research questions used to guide this study were as follows:

1. What are the demographic characteristics (gender, age, ethnicity, residence, education, occupation, income, affiliation, engagement) of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association?
2. Are there differences in the motivations for volunteering based on the demographic traits (gender, age, education, personal affiliation) of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association?
3. What are the perceived benefits to members for joining a local affiliate of the National FFA Alumni Association?

4. Are there differences in members' loyalty to the National FFA Alumni Association and the local FFA Alumni affiliate? Is there a relationship between members' loyalty to the local FFA Alumni affiliate and their level of engagement?

### **Summary, Conclusions, and Implications: Research Question One**

Prior to this study, the only study focused directly on the demographics of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association was a non-scientific, convenience questionnaire limited to life-members (F. Saldana, personal communication, March, 2009). The results of that study reported the average age of a life-member to be 60 years old. There were 81.5% male members and nearly half were college graduates. Also, over 77% had been FFA members in high school. In comparison to Saldana's work, this study found the National FFA Alumni Association is comprised of predominantly white, male, college educated, actively engaged former FFA members with an average age of 49.6 years. Further demographics and characteristics of members are reported in this section. These data will provide the FFA Alumni staff and executive council with more statistically accurate information related to membership.

**Personal characteristics.** The average age of the FFA Alumni members in this study was 49.6 years old with male members slightly older at 52.4 years compared to female members at 43.7 years. There were 64.4% male members. The largest age category for participants was the 45 to 54 years age group followed by the next older categories, 55 to 64 years, and 65 and over, and then the 35 to 44 year age group. These categories are slightly older than the ages of volunteers in the United States as reported by the Bureau of Labor Statistics (BLS, 2010) who report the largest category as 35 to 44, followed by 45 to 54, 55 to 64 and 65 and older. The two youngest groups, 25 to 34 and 24 and under, remain the smallest groups in both this study and the BLS report.

The age of FFA Alumni members is a concern to many wishing to grow the organization because of the stereotype of the association being an “old white guys” organization. Each year, FFA chapter and state leaders across the nation graduate and many pay their lifetime dues to the FFA Alumni to maintain a connection to the association. However, many of these young leaders do not actively participate in leadership roles within the FFA Alumni at the local, state, or national levels. An argument can be made that the FFA Alumni should reflect a much younger audience based on the review of the literature. Shields (2009) reported that young volunteers were interested in working with “organizations that were either local and personal or nationally renowned. Organizations benefiting children were also highly regarded” (p 139). The FFA Alumni fits this description perfectly, having local and national level affiliation, and directly benefiting children. Nationwide, young adults are highly involved in volunteer activities and have positive views of volunteerism and are an excellent source of volunteers (Boraas, 2003; Burns et al., 2008). Unless the National FFA Alumni Association actively recruits young members, achieving the long term goals for growth will be impossible. Reaching out to this under-represented population will take focused effort and dedicated resources over time.

Perhaps the age of the members in the association is reflected in the method of communication they prefer when receiving information about the FFA Alumni. Over 53% prefer print media over any other form of communication. The next closest method, e-mail, received 38.1% of the responses while the web page and social media totaled less than 6%. To reach additional members of similar demographic type, continued efforts to reach more members via print media and e-mail is essential. An improved membership database system that will gather accurate mailing and e-mail addresses will help accomplish this task. However, to reach a

different audience more interested in social media, a dedicated communication plan targeting alternative methods is necessary.

Members of the National FFA Alumni Association work closely with the student members of the National FFA Organization and are thought to mirror that membership in their ethnicity. However, the FFA Alumni is seriously lacking in diversity based on the respondents in this study. With a sample made up of 98.4% Caucasian members, the FFA Alumni membership is less diverse than the membership of the National FFA Organization at 77.8% Caucasian. The remaining ethnicities represented by the National FFA Organization and National FFA Alumni Association in this study are Hispanic (15%, 0%), African American (4.0%, 0%), Native American (2.0%, 0.8%) and Asian American (1.0%, 0.8%).

The National FFA Alumni Association should actively recruit members in areas of ethnic diversity and expand into FFA chapters and agricultural education programs which reflect the diversity of the National FFA Organization. Many states have diverse FFA chapters but may not have local FFA Alumni affiliates associated with the national association. It is critical that the association change its membership structure to reach local support groups that are not currently affiliated.

When comparing area of residence of FFA Alumni and FFA student members, there are also differences. FFA Alumni members predominantly classify their area of residence as rural farming at 54.5% compared to FFA members at 28.6%. The predominant area of residence for FFA members is rural non-farm at 40.7% and FFA Alumni members at 21.2%. FFA Alumni members living in suburban areas accounted for 12.4% and urban areas 11.9%. FFA members also identify small town (20.3%) and urban/suburban (10.3%) areas of residence.

By far, most FFA chapters are located in rural areas in small schools. However, local FFA chapters are found in 16 of the 20 largest cities in the United States including New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, Philadelphia, Minneapolis St. Paul, Indianapolis, and Kansas City. If the National FFA Alumni wishes to grow, as well as alter its diversity, there are numerous FFA chapters into which they can expand that would offer that opportunity.

**Professional characteristics.** The majority of FFA Alumni members in this study attended some college with 22.8% attending a technical school or receiving an associate's degree, and 45.9% achieving a bachelor's degree or higher. This closely matches Saldana's study that reported nearly half of life members were college graduates (46.2%). The FFA Alumni are similar to volunteers reported in the BLS (2010) report which identified 42.8% of volunteers had a bachelor's degree or higher and 30.5% attended some college or had an associate's degree.

Agricultural occupations, including farming, sales and service, and other agricultural industry, are the primary areas of employment for FFA Alumni members accounting for 59.3% of the membership. Non-agricultural related occupations accounted for 27.5% of the membership with over 13% either unemployed or not in the workforce. Of those that offered additional information, many of these respondents were either retired, in college, or had chosen to stay home to raise a family. Over 40% make in excess of \$60,000, and nearly 27% more make over \$40,000.

As the FFA Alumni at the local and national levels look for new members, seek funding for programs and activities, and offer volunteer activities for members, the professional characteristics of the membership should be considered. The current member is most likely a college educated professional employed in an agricultural related field. This means a busy

person with disposable income. The average member donates nearly \$340 and volunteers over 40 hours a year to the local FFA chapter or FFA Alumni affiliate.

**Involvement characteristics.** Even though FFA membership in high school is not required to be a member of the FFA Alumni, over 71% of the respondents in this survey were members of FFA when they were in high school and another 22% have children that are, or were, FFA members. This compares to Saldana's study where 77% of life members had been FFA members. Alumni membership is open to any person in a community that wishes to join and support agricultural education and FFA whether or not they were in FFA. Marketing materials provided by the National FFA Alumni Association focus on this fact, yet a common misconception of community members and parents of FFA members is that FFA Alumni membership is limited to former FFA members. Even if FFA Alumni membership continues to only appeal to former FFA members, there are currently over 523,000 members in the FFA nationally. Marketing to current members and their parents should provide opportunity for growth.

When asked how they would classify their engagement with the local FFA Alumni, 41.4% said they fit the informed category; they participate in activities locally when asked. Another 22% considered themselves inactive, not engaged in local activities. Yet when compared to the Net Promoter Score (NPS) categories, members that consider themselves involved or invested are more likely to recommend joining the local FFA Alumni to a friend. The most effective method of marketing is one-on-one communication, directly asking another to join (BLS, 2010; Dalton & Dignam, 2007). Of the respondents in this study, only 47.6% said they actively recruited. When asked who encouraged them to join, nearly 60% credited the FFA Advisor, a family member, or another member not part of their family. If more members were to

become more involved in their local affiliates, the chances are much higher that they would become promoters of the program and recruit more members to join, providing for the desired growth for the National FFA Alumni Association.

FFA Alumni members are more inclined to volunteer than the general public. According to the BLS (2010), nearly 69% of the population that volunteers limit their volunteer activities to one organization, and less than 20% more volunteer for two organizations, only allowing for 11% to volunteer for three or more organizations. FFA Alumni members in this study indicated that nearly 40% volunteered for three or more organizations, and over 26% volunteered for two additional organizations besides the local FFA Alumni affiliate. If the number of organizations for which they volunteer is any indication, FFA Alumni members are committed to the cause for which they volunteer. This may be a double edged sword that also limits the amount of time they can spend volunteering. It may also explain why over 40% of the respondents consider their level of engagement to be informed and only volunteer when asked instead of being more involved on a regular basis and serving on committees.

### **Summary, Conclusions, and Implications: Research Question Two**

To measure the differences in motivations to volunteer between various demographic variables, the Volunteer Functions Inventory (VFI, Clary et al., 1998) was determined to be the most appropriate instrument for the purpose. The study used a seven-point rating scale asking respondents how important each statement was as it related to their motivation to volunteer with a range from 1 = not at all important to 7 = extremely important.

The two most important motivations to volunteer for FFA Alumni members were values ( $M = 5.72$ ) and understanding ( $M = 5.01$ ). These scores are consistent with Clary et al. (1998) in their study of volunteers engaged in a wide variety of volunteer services. They discovered the

top functions were the values function ( $M=5.82$ ) and the understanding function ( $M=4.91$ ). This is also consistent with additional studies that showed the values function as the most important factor (Burns et al., 2008, Papadakis et al., 2005).

The values function relates to an altruistic motivation for helping others. The specific statements in this study receiving the highest mean scores were “I feel it is important to help others,” “I can do something for a cause that is important to me,” and “I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving”. These three statements come as no surprise when comparing them to the results of research question three related to the personal benefits for joining the FFA Alumni. FFA Alumni members primarily join to fulfill a personal desire or satisfaction, or to support the FFA members and help kids.

The understanding function relates to opportunities for volunteers to gain new knowledge and skills or share their knowledge and skills with others. The highest ranking statements in this section were “volunteering allows me to gain a new perspective on things” and “volunteering lets me learn things through direct, hands-on experience.” These two statements are in alignment with the first two lines of the National FFA Motto, “Learning to Do, Doing to Learn.” Learning through hands-on experiences and application of new knowledge are common for both FFA members and FFA Alumni members.

The next two most important motivations to volunteer were the social and enhancement functions. The social function fulfills a desire to expand one’s social circles or join new social groups. Enhancement is focused on the desire for professional growth and enhancing the self-esteem of the volunteer. Related to research question three, these two motivations provide no surprise. The statement in the enhancement function with the highest mean score was “volunteering is a way to make new friends.” The largest category for benefits to a member for

joining the FFA Alumni was social/personal benefits. Personal friendships/relationships and fun, social activities were common responses. Personal growth/satisfaction/fulfillment was the most common subcategory and relates directly to enhancing one's personal self. The specific statement in the social function receiving the highest mean score was "people I know share an interest in community service." This is also no surprise as one of the benefits identified in research question three was helping the community and giving back to others.

The lowest ranking motivations to volunteer with mean scores below neutral were the career and protective functions. One statement in the protective function did score higher than the rest, "no matter how bad I've been feeling, volunteering helps me to forget about it." FFA Alumni members may not generally volunteer for activities to further their careers, or feel the need to escape their own troubles or reduce guilt, but do find it comforting when working alongside others in a volunteer activity.

That the values and understanding functions rise to the top of this study as the primary motivations for volunteering would come as no surprise to Randle and Dolnicar (2009) who found that volunteers that contributed more than 40 hours annually did so for both altruistic and egocentric reasons. FFA Alumni members reported volunteering an average of 42.7 hours annually, and were motivated by values (altruistic) and understanding (egocentric) functions.

Understanding the motivational functions for current members provides insight into the methods for future recruitment of members that are similar to the current membership. Knowing what motivates members to volunteer for the FFA Alumni provides a basis for developing marketing messages and a focus for recruitment materials. However, this study only identified the characteristics and motivations of current members and does not necessarily reflect the motivations for non-members for which future recruitment messages should be targeted.

**Gender.** Male and female FFA Alumni members volunteer for the same reasons, but place significantly different levels of importance on each function. Female members place more importance on values than do male members. Both males and females rank values higher than any other motivation for volunteering with the understanding function ranking second for both. This concurs with Burns et al. (2008) who also found that the values and understanding functions were most important to both genders but females had a much stronger motivation to volunteer in both functions. The results of these studies suggest that when marketing to new members, regardless of gender, the National FFA Alumni Association should create materials focused on values and understanding to attract new volunteers. Clary et al. (1992) provided support for that conclusion. Once members are recruited, appealing to their values and understanding functions will keep them in the association longer. This is supported by Allison et al. (2002) and Okun (1994).

Women exhibit stronger motivations for volunteering than men, but account for less than 36% of the membership of the FFA Alumni. Recruitment of female members based on the results of this study should focus on opportunities to help students in an organization that is important to them and gaining new perspectives and experiences while working with a variety of people.

**Age.** The results of this study indicate a significant negative correlation in four of the six motivational functions in regards to the age of the member. Younger members were more motivated by careers, understanding, values, and enhancement than were older members. While all ages found the latter three to be important, the one difference was the careers function which ranked at the bottom of every scale by all demographics. This can be accounted for by the large number of older members with over 62% in the upper three age brackets of 45 and older. This

study supports the assumption of Yoshioka et al. (2007) in a study of senior adults where they assumed the career function would have less importance for those that had retired.

Younger members of the current membership of the FFA Alumni reported that building their career was not a major reason for which they volunteered. However, young members said this was more important to them than older members. For recruiting new members that are not currently engaged with the FFA Alumni, this motivation should not be discounted or considered unimportant. New members in the younger age groups may determine that building their resumes or developing job related skills may be more important reasons for volunteering than the current members' motivations of values and understanding.

**Education.** The review of the literature would lead one to believe there would be a significant difference in the motivations to volunteer based on educational attainment (BLS, 2010; Boraas, 2003; McPherson & Rotolo, 1996; Reed & Selbee, 2000; Yavas & Reicken, 1985). While most of these studies focused on time spent volunteering and the type of volunteer activities undertaken, one would expect the motivations for volunteering to be different among educational levels. Only the protective function was found to be significantly different between those with a high school education or less and those with bachelor's degrees. However, in both cases the protective function ranked near the bottom in order of importance.

**Affiliation.** Most of the literature suggested that affiliation with a group or organization was the motivation for volunteering (Bussell & Forbes, 2002; Culp, 1997; Fritz et al., 2000; Henderson, 1981). However, this study sought to determine if having a personal affiliation with the FFA, i.e. having been a member or having a child involved in the organization, would have an effect on the motivational functions to volunteer. By treating affiliation as an independent variable instead of the motivation, this study determined only the career function was different

between those with moderate affiliation and no affiliation. The definition assigned to moderate affiliation for this study was an FFA Alumni member who was an FFA member in high school but did not have children currently or previously in FFA. The only other correlation involving the career function as a motivation to volunteer was age, indicating younger members found careers to be more important than older members. It is possible that younger members motivated more by careers also fit the definition of moderate affiliation, having no children in FFA because they are too young. However, the mean scores for both affiliation groups were below the neutral level and can be considered not to be a factor.

### **Summary, Conclusions, and Implications: Research Question Three**

The review of the literature revealed a dearth of information related to the benefits for members. This is problematic in relation to reaching the goals the National FFA Association has set for growth. It is increasingly important for the National FFA Alumni Association to develop a marketing plan for the recruitment of new members. “The key to an organization’s success in recruiting and retaining its volunteers is to have an understanding of its target group” (Bussell & Forbes, 2002, p. 244). This study has provided the framework for that step to happen.

The next step is to articulate to potential members the benefits for joining the local FFA Alumni affiliate. Research question three addressed that issue. The major themes for which members received benefits were social and personal benefits, opportunities for service, and connectedness. Within each theme lie more specific benefits by which marketing to new members can occur. The most common benefit for joining identified by members was the opportunity provided them for developing their personal growth, providing a sense of fulfillment, and personal satisfaction for making a difference. One member said, “Sometimes you think you don’t have time for anything but suddenly volunteering seems so important.” Another

respondent commented that he/she was “continually developing leadership skills.” Other benefits in this theme included the opportunity to make personal friendships or relationships; the chance to give back to the FFA, or continue the FFA tradition that they were part of as a child; and participating in social activities that were fun.

The second benefit was based on the theme of providing opportunities for service. The second most identified benefit was the opportunity to help FFA members and support the youth of the community. Several comments in this area can be summed up in this statement by one member who stated, “helping the kids enjoy FFA and be able to go places they might not be able to go to without our help.” Other benefits in this area included supporting the local FFA chapter, the agricultural education program, and the school; helping the community by giving back to others less fortunate; and promoting a cause, supporting agriculture and the agricultural way of life.

The third benefit was a sense of connectedness. The most common benefit was the connection to a network of peers, colleagues, and other people with like interests. Two examples of the types of comments made in this section included “opportunity to work with people in the ag community” and “working with others for the common cause for the growth of the FFA.” Other connections members found important were connections to the local FFA chapter and the local community, and the opportunity to participate in activities with their own children.

In order to reach new members, these benefits need to be communicated to potential members through messaging directed at the motivational functions of values and understanding. Clary and Snyder (1999) reported that “persuasive messages can motivate people to initiate volunteer service to the extent that the messages are tailored to the specific motivations important to individual recipients of the messages” (p. 158).

One issue that does pose a question is why 168 members chose not to respond to this question, and that 20 respondents only provided one benefit when the opportunity to provide three benefits was given. While it is possible that the respondents chose to leave the question blank because they did not want to spend the time responding to an open-ended question (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006), it is also possible that respondents could not articulate specific benefits for joining a local FFA Alumni affiliate.

### **Summary, Conclusions, and Implications: Research Question Four**

As a means of recruitment, organizations can use the NPS as a gauge for measuring the loyalty of members. Loyal members are promoters of the program and are more likely to recruit new members by word-of-mouth advertising. This study, as did the study by Dalton and Dignam (2007), confirmed that the more engaged a member was, the more likely they were to be a promoter. The opposite is also true, that a member that was inactive was less likely to be a promoter and more likely to be a detractor.

The respondents in this study had a significantly higher degree of loyalty to the local FFA Alumni affiliate (NPS = 41) than to the National FFA Alumni association (NPS = 19). Dues are collected at the local level and sent to the state and national associations. Most activities occur at the local level. Many FFA Alumni members may not see the connection to the national level or see the benefit for affiliating with the national association. It is widely accepted in the agricultural education community that there are numerous FFA Alumni affiliates, or FFA booster clubs, at the local level that do not affiliate nationally (Heinert, 2008). In order to grow, the National FFA Alumni Association will need to address this issue and provide a new method for affiliating with local FFA chapters and local FFA booster clubs.

## **Discussion**

The age of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association is an issue that the association needs to address for future growth and sustainability. Two general issues need to be addressed: engaging current young members of the association, and recruiting new young members into the association.

The FFA Alumni needs to recruit current young members into leadership roles at the local, state, and national levels. Additional opportunities for service need to be provided that attract a younger audience. The current activities, meetings and conventions, training materials, and other resources may be examples of why young members are not involved. To fully understand the needs and identify methods of engaging younger members, these members must be asked directly for advice and input into future programming and resource development. The first step is to identify affiliates with a large population of young members and then glean ideas, activities, and best practices being utilized by the leaders of the affiliate to attract and engage young members. A series of nationwide focus groups of young inactive members would generate issues young members see as barriers for becoming more engaged.

These same strategies could also be utilized to determine what current young members view as barriers to reaching new members into the association. Marketing to new members with similar interests as current members will be easier based on the findings of this study. However, just because current members are motivated to volunteer by their values, understanding, social and enhancement functions, future young members may be more inclined to volunteer for more career oriented reasons, or place higher importance on enhancement or social activities than do the current members.

Communication with young members is critical for providing opportunities for engagement or recruitment. The current membership of the association prefers print material or mail, but based on personal communication with multiple young adults in the 20 to 30 age group, social media is their preferred method of communication. Less than 2% of the respondents in this study indicated social media as the preferred method of communication. Another 4% used the web page as a source of information related to FFA Alumni activities. Reaching new members and engaging young members through social media and the Internet provides an open field of opportunity, yet also provides challenges for reaching this market. Simply posting information in social media outlets will not automatically mean members will see this information if they are not seeking it. Utilizing social media outlets is only effective if it can reach the target audience. The leadership of the FFA Alumni needs to advertise in non-traditional markets to find a source of new young members.

Diversification of the membership is another avenue of growth that should be pursued. Besides age, to diversify means reaching new members of different ethnicity, socioeconomic background, areas of residence, and career orientation. Reaching out to current FFA chapters that reflect the types of diversity desired by the FFA Alumni is a prime place to start. With FFA chapters in urban areas and communities which reflect a more diverse ethnic population, the FFA Alumni needs to identify the needs for these chapters and the barriers these chapters perceive for not affiliating with the national association. Many of the most diverse FFA chapters are located in the western FFA region, yet only 9.3% of the FFA Alumni membership is found in the western region. Strategically marketing to this region should be a priority for future growth.

One question the leadership of the National FFA Alumni Association needs to clarify is whether the FFA Alumni is more interested in growing the number of members on its roster, or if

it is more important to provide more opportunities for students and FFA Alumni members to develop premier leadership, personal growth, and career success. If their intent is the latter, the challenge is knowing who those volunteers are if they are not affiliated with the national association.

Building the database of names is one way to provide resources, ideas, and opportunities to students and members. Members receive personal benefits at the local level whether they belong to the national association or not. To entice these local members to join nationally, additional benefits must be provided that address the needs and motivational functions of the members. States with low percentages of membership need to be addressed and members and leaders of non-affiliated booster clubs need to be surveyed to determine why they are not affiliated. Without such knowledge, reaching these groups will be difficult.

To summarize this study, one goal of the National FFA Alumni Association is to grow. Growth requires new members. New members join for one of two reasons. They most often make the decision to join themselves. To attract these members, purposeful messaging to their motivations is essential. Explaining the benefits of membership as they relate to these motivations should be a powerful tool for the local affiliate. The second way new members join is they are asked by someone. That person is most often the FFA advisor. Continued support should be provided to the advisor on the value of a local FFA Alumni affiliate. Others that recruit new members are the current members that are promoters of the program. Promoters are highly engaged in the local affiliate. The local affiliate needs to provide opportunities for engagement based on the motivational functions of values, understanding, social and enhancement.

## **Recommendations**

**Recommendations for research.** In 2008, the National FFA Alumni Association strategic planning task force identified two primary themes that needed to be addressed: data collection and research, and marketing of the FFA Alumni Association. This study specifically addressed both of these themes by providing data on the demographic characteristics of the membership, research on the motivations for volunteering, identifying the benefits for joining, and providing suggestions on marketing to new members. While this study has addressed both of these themes, continued data collection is needed through the membership system and additional research. Recommendations for continued research are provided in this section.

Based on the findings of this study, further research should be conducted on how the National FFA Alumni Association can appeal to a more diverse population. The National FFA Organization currently has FFA chapters in urban areas as well as areas of major ethnic diversity. This study surveyed current FFA Alumni members to determine their motivation for volunteering and their perceived benefits for joining a local FFA Alumni affiliate. This achieved the purpose of the study, but to truly gain new members in a more diverse environment it will be essential to determine if non-members possess the same motivations to volunteer and what the barriers are to keep them from joining.

Another area of growth that would also bring diversity to the association deals with the age of the membership. The National FFA Alumni Association is an aging population and the need to attract younger members and leaders is an important barrier that needs to be broken. Additional research on how to appeal to a younger audience and how to engage them in leadership roles is needed if the FFA Alumni desires to grow. Identifying state associations which reflect a younger membership should be studied for gleaning promising practices and ideas that can be implemented nationwide.

The local FFA Advisor is the single most influential outside influence on a new member's decision to join the local affiliate, yet there are only 1263 local FFA Alumni affiliates nationwide. One of the benefits to a local FFA Alumni member is the ability to help the local FFA chapter and agricultural education program. The question that begs to be asked is what the perceived barriers are for local FFA Advisors to keep them from starting local FFA Alumni affiliates in their local chapters.

The data gathered from this study related to research question three, the benefits of joining, was a good beginning point for developing a complete and accurate list of benefits. Further refining of this list and drilling down to more specific benefits will provide additional information that is extremely valuable to the National FFA Alumni Association or the local FFA Alumni affiliates.

Highly engaged members are promoters of the program. Members are more likely to become engaged if the activities for which they volunteer are closely aligned with their motivations for volunteering. A study of the most engaged affiliates to determine the activities they provide to their members would be beneficial to other affiliates that are struggling.

The NPS has been institutionally accepted by the leadership of the National FFA Organization as the means by which customer loyalty will be evaluated. The NPS question has its critics. Many of the recommendations of this study are dependent on the NPS being an accurate tool by which to measure member loyalty. Further research on the accuracy of the NPS needs to be conducted to determine if members identified as promoters actually recruit more new members to a local affiliate than those that fit into the passive or detractor categories.

While we know the number of local FFA Alumni affiliates across the country that are associated with the national association, little is known about the local FFA booster clubs and non-affiliated chapters with parents and other support groups that are formally or informally in operation. Additional research is needed to determine why these local clubs are not affiliated with the National FFA Alumni Association and what they perceive as barriers to affiliation.

One final area of research not addressed by this study is related to the name of the National FFA Alumni Association. One challenge offered by the 2008 FFA Alumni strategic planning meeting was to identify if the name, FFA Alumni, was a deterrent to attracting members. Membership in the National FFA Alumni Association is unlike most other alumni organizations. Membership is not limited to former FFA members, but is open to anybody with a sincere interest in promoting, supporting, and engaging in the local FFA chapter (Talbert et al., 2005). Because of the open membership policy, there is a great opportunity to reach out to every person in a community as a potential member, not just the past members of the local FFA chapter.

**Recommendations for practice.** Based on the findings of this study, the following recommendations for practice are submitted.

1. Bussell and Forbes (2002) identified the need for agencies to focus on marketing techniques in order to recruit volunteers. “The key to an organization’s success in recruiting and retaining its volunteers is to have an understanding of its target group” (p. 244). The National FFA Alumni Association needs to create marketing materials addressing the motivational functions of values, understanding, social, and enhancement. These materials need to be provided to local FFA Alumni affiliates as a marketing tool for recruiting new members. Brochures and handouts with specific persuasive messaging related to these four motivational functions need to be provided along with training on how to use the materials in a variety of settings.
2. Training also needs to be provided on how to personally recruit new members. With only half of the members in this study reporting they had actively recruited new members, one opportunity for growth appears to lie in focusing on this skill. When members recruited new volunteers one-on-one, new members were more likely to remain in the organization

(Hager & Brudney, 2004). A certain level of trust in the personal interaction is built when the individual members involved in the organization served as the spokesperson.

3. The current membership roster database system needs to be examined for accuracy and methods by which a more precise accounting of members can be obtained. In this study, the original population of 49,589 was trimmed to 42,437 (85.6%) usable addresses for USPS delivery. After selecting a random sample of 1000 participants, an additional 7.8% of addresses were not accurate for those members and were returned as undeliverable. An additional 0.7% of the sample were deceased. One survey was returned by the participant's spouse explaining that the member had died in 1992. The current system is dependent on the membership representative or leadership of the local affiliate to purge the name from the roster and maintain an accurate listing of addresses. Over half of FFA Alumni members prefer print materials as the means of communication about FFA Alumni activities, yet without a valid mailing address many members cannot be reached. For 38.1% of FFA Alumni members, the preferred method of communication is e-mail. The national FFA Alumni membership system currently does not capture e-mail addresses. To communicate with members, it will be necessary to start collecting e-mail addresses as a part of the membership system. Without a new membership system, the National FFA Alumni Association may not be able to communicate accurate membership numbers.
4. The National FFA Alumni Association is an aging population with 17% of the membership reported to be over 65 years of age, and an additional 20% over 55 years of age. On the other end of the range, just over 7% of the membership responded they were in the 24 and under category. However, young adults are an under-represented market

segment that should be targeted for their potential interest in volunteering (Hankinson & Rochester, 2005). Young adults' views of volunteerism are positive and are very involved in volunteer activities in other organizations that are very similar to the National FFA Alumni Association (Boraas, 2003; Burns, 2008). The BLS (2010) report that the 25 and under age group account for 13.1% of all volunteers in the U.S. If the findings of these earlier studies are accurate, the National FFA Alumni Association is missing the mark with only 7.1% of the membership under 25 years of age. The leadership of the National FFA Alumni Association needs to immediately put into place a plan of action to attract new young members and leaders into the association. Utilizing the findings of this study related to the values, understanding, social, and enhancement motivations, young members need to be aggressively recruited into the association and groomed for leadership positions.

5. Using the baseline NPS for determining loyalty to the local FFA Alumni affiliate, a score of 41, the leadership in local affiliates should use the NPS question with their membership to determine loyalty members have towards their organization. More engaged members are more likely to become promoters for the organization and less engage members are more likely to become detractors and have potential for leaving the affiliate. Comparing the local score to the national baseline score of 41 will help a local affiliate gauge their success or may provide a warning that they need to engage more members in local activities.
6. To address the diversity issue, the National FFA Alumni Association needs to work with local FFA chapters and state FFA associations which have diverse student populations but do not affiliate with the national association. Reassessing the current membership

structure, identifying and communicating national benefits for the local member, and determining the barriers to affiliation are ways to start addressing non-affiliated local organizations.

7. The leaders of the local FFA Alumni affiliates need to actively engage their members on a regular basis and provide opportunities that address the motivational functions for volunteering if they desire to grow the association. They need to identify the interests and availability of time and resources of the local members, provide opportunities that fit these parameters, and communicate opportunities to members in order to engage them more effectively. An engaged member is more likely to recruit others to join.

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## Appendix A: IRB Approval Letter



University Research  
Compliance Office  
203 Fairchild Hall  
Lower Mezzanine  
Manhattan, KS 66506-1103  
785-532-3224  
Fax: 785-532-3278  
[www.k-state.edu/research/comply](http://www.k-state.edu/research/comply)

TO: Steve Harbstreit  
Ag Communications  
111 Umberger

Proposal Number: 5652

FROM: Rick Scheidt, Chair   
Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: November 15, 2010

RE: Proposal Entitled, "A Study of the membership of the National FFA Alumni Association:  
Volunteering, loyalty, and benefits"

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects / Institutional Review Board (IRB) for Kansas State University has reviewed the proposal identified above and has determined that it is EXEMPT from further IRB review. This exemption applies only to the proposal - as written – and currently on file with the IRB. Any change potentially affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation and may disqualify the proposal from exemption.

Based upon information provided to the IRB, this activity is exempt under the criteria set forth in the Federal Policy for the Protection of Human Subjects, **45 CFR §46.101, paragraph b, category: 2, subsection: ii.**

Certain research is exempt from the requirements of HHS/OHRP regulations. A determination that research is exempt does not imply that investigators have no ethical responsibilities to subjects in such research; it means only that the regulatory requirements related to IRB review, informed consent, and assurance of compliance do not apply to the research.

Any unanticipated problems involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, the University Research Compliance Office, and if the subjects are KSU students, to the Director of the Student Health Center.

## **Appendix B: Pre-notice Letter.**

**National FFA Alumni  
6060 FFA Drive, PO Box 68960  
Indianapolis, IN 46268**

November 22, 2010

(insert name)  
(insert address)  
(insert city/state/zip)

Dear (insert name),

Within the next few days you will receive in the mail a request to participate in a brief survey about the National FFA Alumni Association. This survey is part of the doctoral research of Mr. Larry Gossen with the National FFA Organization.

You were chosen to participate in this study because you were a member of the National FFA Alumni Association in 2009-2010. Only a random sample of members from across the nation were chosen to take part in this study, so every response will be very important to the success of this research.

As a member of the National FFA Alumni Association, you are often contacted to volunteer for activities and events. The purpose of this survey is to understand what motivates members of the FFA Alumni to volunteer and to engage with a local affiliate or with the state or national association. We also hope to identify the benefits for joining the FFA Alumni and to determine the demographic characteristics of the average FFA Alumni member.

I am writing to you in advance of the actual survey because many people like to know ahead of time that they have been selected to be part of a research study. This is a very important study for the National FFA Alumni Association as they work to grow the organization and to meet the needs of the members.

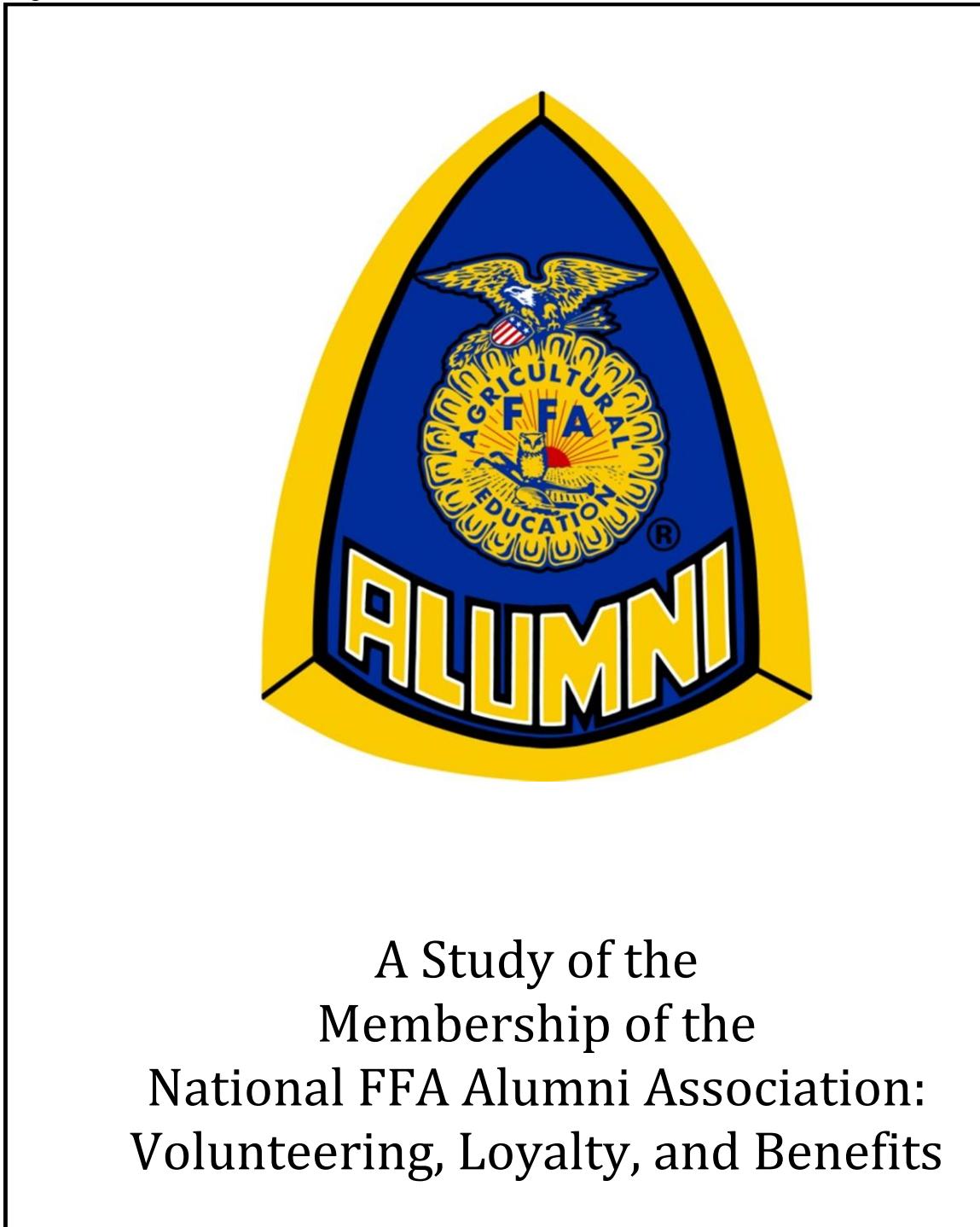
I hope you will consider taking time out of your busy schedule to provide your feedback in the next few weeks to help move the Association forward. It is because of committed members like you that we will have the information we need to move the National FFA Alumni to the next level.

Sincerely,

Mr. Larry A. Gossen  
National FFA Organization

## **Appendix C: Instrument**

Page 1 – Front cover



**National FFA Alumni Association  
6060 FFA Drive, P.O. Box 68960  
Indianapolis, IN 46268**

November 29, 2010

I am writing to you today because you play an important role in the future of the National FFA Alumni Association. In the 40 years of its existence, the National FFA Alumni has been the subject of very little research. Therefore, very little information exists as to why people volunteer, what the benefits are for joining, or even who the members of the association are.

You were chosen to participate in this study because you were a member of the National FFA Alumni Association in 2009-2010. Only a random sample of members from across the nation were chosen to take part in this study, so every response is very important to the success of this research. Our study will focus on the motivation of Alumni members to volunteer and to be engaged with a local affiliate or with the state or national association. We also hope to determine the benefits for members when they join a local FFA Alumni affiliate.

Every effort will be made to keep your answers confidential, and your answers will be consolidated with others and reported only as group information. Your participation is totally voluntary, and you have the right to withdraw your consent or discontinue in this study at any time. You may also skip any questions which make you feel uncomfortable. It should take you approximately 15 minutes to complete this survey.

If you have any questions, concerns or comments about this study, we would be happy to talk with you. You may contact Larry Gossen at (317) 802-4352, Dr. Steve Harbstreit at (785) 532-5928, or the National FFA Alumni at (317) 802-6060. If you would rather contact us by writing, please address your correspondence to the address above. If you have any questions or want to discuss any aspect of this research with an official of the university or Institutional Review Board, you may contact Rick Scheidt, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

Thank you again for your help in this important study. Your participation will be of great assistance in the growth of the National FFA Alumni Association.

Sincerely,

Mr. Larry A. Gossen  
Team Leader, Local Program Success  
National FFA Organization

# **National FFA Alumni Association Volunteerism Survey 2010**

Thank you for taking time to participate in this important study of the **National FFA Alumni Association**. As a National FFA Alumni member, *your* responses are *important* for the future of the association. Very little research has been done in the past, so this study will provide information that will be used to help the national association continue to grow.

**Section 1: Circle the numbers below that best describe your answers to the following questions.**

1. Using a scale of 0 through 10, with 0 being “not at all likely” and 10 being “extremely likely,” how likely is it that you would recommend membership in the **National FFA Alumni Association** to a friend or colleague?

2. Using a scale of 0 through 10, with 0 being “not at all likely” and 10 being “extremely likely,” how likely is it that you would recommend membership in **a local FFA Alumni affiliate** to a friend or colleague?

**Section 2:** Circle the numbers below that best describe your answers to the following questions.

Volunteering is one part of being an active FFA Alumni member. Please indicate **how important** each item is as it relates to your **motivation to volunteer**. In selecting an answer, be realistic about your motivation. Use the following scale with 1 being “not at all important” and 7 being “extremely important.”

1 = not at all important

4 = neutral

7 = extremely important

3.	Volunteering can help me to get my foot in the door at a place where I would like to work.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
4.	My friends volunteer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
5.	I am concerned about those less fortunate than myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
6.	People I'm close to want me to volunteer.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
7.	Volunteering makes me feel important.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
8.	People I know share an interest in community service.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
9.	No matter how bad I've been feeling, volunteering helps me to forget about it.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
10.	I am genuinely concerned about the particular group I am serving.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
11.	By volunteering I feel less lonely.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
12.	I can make new contacts that might help my business or career.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

Page 4 – second page of survey

13.	Doing volunteer work relieves me of some of the guilt over being more fortunate than others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
14.	I can learn more about the cause for which I am working.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
15.	Volunteering increases my self-esteem.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
16.	Volunteering allows me to gain a new perspective on things.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
17.	Volunteering allows me to explore different career options.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
18.	I feel compassion toward people in need.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
19.	Others with whom I am close place a high value on community service.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
20.	Volunteering lets me learn things through direct, hands-on experience.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
21.	I feel it is important to help others.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
22.	Volunteering helps me work through my own personal problems.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
23.	Volunteering will help me to succeed in my chosen profession.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
24.	I can do something for a cause that is important to me.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
25.	Volunteering is an important activity to the people I know best.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
26.	Volunteering is a good escape from my own troubles.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
27.	I can learn how to deal with a variety of people.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
28.	Volunteering makes me feel needed.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
29.	Volunteering makes me feel better about myself.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
30.	Volunteering experience will look good on my resume.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
31.	Volunteering is a way to make new friends.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7
32.	I can explore my own strengths.	1	2	3	4	5	6	7

**Section 3:**

33. What are three personal benefits a member receives by joining a local FFA Alumni affiliate?
- - 
  -

**Section 4:**

Please answer each question below with the answer that most closely fits you in each category.

34. What is your age? \_\_\_\_\_
35. What is your gender?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Male  
\_\_\_\_\_ Female
36. What is your highest level of education completed?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Less than High School  
\_\_\_\_\_ High School Graduate  
\_\_\_\_\_ Technical School or Associate Degree  
\_\_\_\_\_ Bachelor's Degree  
\_\_\_\_\_ Master's Degree  
\_\_\_\_\_ Doctorate Degree
37. Were you a member of FFA in high school?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ No
38. Do you have any children who are currently FFA members in high school?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ No
39. Have you ever had any children who were FFA members in high school?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ No
40. To what degree would you classify your engagement with the local FFA Alumni?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Inactive – not engaged in any local activities  
\_\_\_\_\_ Informed – participate in activities locally when asked  
\_\_\_\_\_ Involved – engaged in local activities, serve on committees or as an officer  
\_\_\_\_\_ Invested – highly engaged by representing a local affiliate at the state and/or national level
41. Do you consider your local FFA Alumni affiliate as active/engaged?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ No  
\_\_\_\_\_ N/A (I am not affiliated with a local program)
42. How much do you donate financially to the local FFA chapter or FFA Alumni affiliate annually?  
\_\_\_\_\_ dollars
43. How many hours annually do you volunteer for FFA Alumni activities at any level?  
\_\_\_\_\_ hours
44. Have you actively recruited individuals to become local FFA Alumni members?  
\_\_\_\_\_ Yes  
\_\_\_\_\_ No
45. Who encouraged you to join the FFA Alumni?  
\_\_\_\_\_ A family member  
\_\_\_\_\_ Another member, non-family  
\_\_\_\_\_ Local FFA Advisor  
\_\_\_\_\_ Decided to join myself  
\_\_\_\_\_ Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_

Page 6 – fourth page of survey

46. At what age did you first join the National FFA Alumni Association?
- Under age 25  
 25-34  
 35-44  
 45-54  
 55-64  
 65 or older
47. Are you a life member of the National FFA Alumni?
- Yes  
 No
48. Which **one** of the following media do you prefer as a means of communication about FFA Alumni information?
- E-mail  
 Print Media  
 Social Media (Twitter, Facebook)  
 Web Page  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
49. For how many other organizations do you actively volunteer?  
(please specify how many)
50. What is your ethnic background?
- African American  
 Asian American  
 Caucasian  
 Hispanic/Latino  
 Native American/Indian  
 Other (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_
51. What is your occupation?
- Production Agriculture (Farming)  
 Agricultural Sales and/or Service  
 Other Agricultural related industry (please specify) \_\_\_\_\_  
 Non-agricultural related  
 Unemployed/not in the workforce
52. What is your level of annual income?
- \$0 - \$20,000  
 \$20,001 - \$40,000  
 \$40,001 - \$60,000  
 \$60,001 - \$80,000  
 \$80,001 - \$100,000  
 \$100,001 or more
53. What is your area of residence?
- Urban  
 Suburban  
 Rural – Non Farming  
 Rural – Farming
54. What is your state of residence? \_\_\_\_\_

Thank you for your time in completing this important survey. Your answers will be kept confidential and combined with all other responses for reporting. For a copy of the results of this study, contact the researcher at the address below.

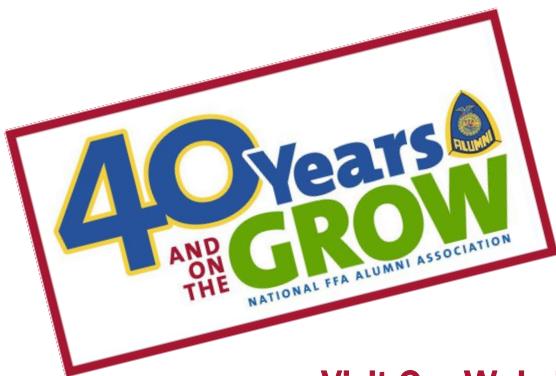
**Please return this survey to:**

Mr. Larry A. Gossen  
National FFA Organization  
6060 FFA Drive, P.O. Box 68960  
Indianapolis, IN 46268



[wwwffa.org/alumni](http://wwwffa.org/alumni)

# National FFA Alumni Association 1971-2011



## Membership Challenge

Visit Our Website: [wwwffa.org/alumni](http://wwwffa.org/alumni)

### 2010-2011 Membership Goals:

- Grow FFA Alumni affiliates by 11% per state in 2011
- Grow National FFA Alumni membership by 11% nationwide in 2011

### Strategic Long-Range Goals:

- Every FFA chapter have an active, fully engaged FFA Alumni affiliate
- Become leaders in advocacy for Agricultural Education at the local level

## **Appendix D: Follow-up Postcard**

Dear Alumni Member,

Last week you received a survey seeking your input about the National FFA Alumni Association and your motivation for volunteering. Your name was randomly drawn from the 2009-2010 membership roster and your input is important. This is a very important study for the National FFA Alumni Association as they work to grow the organization and to meet the needs of the members.

If you have already completed and returned the survey, I want to thank you for your time and input. If not, please take time to do so today. As a member of the National FFA Alumni Association, your input is helpful to understand why committed members of the FFA Alumni volunteer, and what the benefits are for joining the FFA Alumni.

If you did not receive a survey, or if you need another copy, please call me at 317-802-4352 and I will get another one in the mail to you today.

Sincerely,

Larry Gossen  
Team Leader, Local Program Success  
National FFA Organization

## Appendix E: Follow-up Cover Letter

**National FFA Alumni  
6060 FFA Drive, PO Box 68960  
Indianapolis, IN 46268**

January 5, 2011

(insert name)  
(insert address)  
(insert city/state/zip)

Dear (insert name),

Several weeks ago, I sent you a survey about the National FFA Alumni Association. According to my records, your survey has not yet been returned. If you have returned your survey in the last week or so, please disregard this letter and thank you for your response.

As I have reviewed the responses of other FFA Alumni members, I have been impressed with the various motivations that they have reported and the benefits they receive from joining their local affiliate. I think this information is going to be very helpful to the leadership of the National FFA Alumni Association.

I am writing to you again to ask for **your response** to this important survey. While this is a nationwide survey and every state is represented in our sample, **it is important that we receive your response** in order to make sure that you are represented in this study.

If confidentiality is a concern for you, let me assure you that your responses are kept as confidential as possible. A unique identification number is printed on the cover of your survey so we can check your name off the mailing list when your survey is returned. The list of names will be destroyed when this study is over, and individual names cannot be connected to the results in any way. All responses are consolidated and reported only as group information.

I know that you are committed to the National FFA Alumni Association and want to do your part by participating in this important study. The FFA Alumni and I thank you for your commitment to the association. **I look forward to receiving your completed survey soon.** However, if for some reason you choose not to participate, please let me know by sending a note in the enclosed stamped envelope.

Sincerely,

Mr. Larry A. Gossen  
National FFA Organization

## Appendix F: Final Contact Cover Letter

**National FFA Alumni  
6060 FFA Drive, PO Box 68960  
Indianapolis, IN 46268**

January 24, 2011

(insert name)  
(insert address)  
(insert city/state/zip)

Dear (insert name),

In December, I sent you a survey about the National FFA Alumni Association. According to my records, your survey has not yet been returned. If you have returned your survey in the last week or so, please disregard this letter and thank you for your response.

As I have reviewed the responses of other FFA Alumni members, I have been impressed with the various motives that they have reported and the benefits they receive from joining their local affiliate. I think this information is going to be very helpful to the leadership of the National FFA Alumni Association.

I am writing to you again to ask for **your response** to this important survey. While this is a nationwide survey and every state is represented in our sample, **it is important that we receive your response** in order to make sure that you are represented in this study.

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I know that you are committed to the National FFA Alumni Association and want to do your part by participating in this important study. The FFA Alumni and I thank you for your commitment to the association. **I look forward to receiving your completed survey soon.** However, if for some reason you choose not to participate, please let me know by sending a note in the enclosed stamped envelope.

Sincerely,

Mr. Larry A. Gossen  
National FFA Organization