

Exploring and identifying youth and adult partnerships, the lived experiences and the knowledge  
and practices of youth development by youth and adult leaders within the American Hereford  
Association

by

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B.S., University of Wisconsin River Falls, 2012  
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AN ABSTRACT OF A DISSERTATION

submitted in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

Leadership Communications  
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## **Abstract**

Positive youth development (PYD) is a concept that is based around finding the strengths of adolescents driving from the developmental systems theory (PYD) (Lerner et al., 2005 a). The Developmental Systems Theory demonstrates that as a person interacts with their current context it enhances their development (Hamilton et al., 2013). In addition to the Developmental Systems Theory positive youth development is also grounded in the Ecological Systems Theory. The Ecological Systems Theory suggests that the development of an individual is based on their interactions in and across the context (Deurden et al., 2010). Youth and adult partnerships are an important part of a youth's environment and can influence their development (Zeldin et al., 2008).

To better understand the perceptions and interaction of the development of young people this study utilized Jones (2004) Involvement and Interaction Rating scale which analyzes youth and adult interactions while working together in community-based programs. Allport's (1954), Intergroup Contact Theory was used as a theoretical framework which argues that by bringing people together in group settings, prejudices and biases will be reduced, specifically those that have less power, privilege, and status. In the context of this study, prejudice refers to stereotypes such as age, gender, attitudes, personalities, perceptions, and preferences towards an individual. In addition to Intergroup Contact Theory this study also utilized the Relational Leadership Theory.

Relational leadership Theory recognizes that leadership is not just constricted to a single set of leaders or an individual (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Relational Leadership Theory is the study of the dynamics of relationships and the social interactions that occur within an organization or a group and sees leadership as the process in which roles and relationships change within an organization

(Uhl-Bien, 2006). Both intergroup contact theory and the relational leadership theory were useful for this study because it assessed the relations that people have with each other such as youth and adult partnerships. When groups interact, mutual learning is created as people come together for a common purpose creating strong positive relationships. When groups interact and create mutual learning, cooperation among each other, and have an equal status within a group, positive youth development can occur (Jones, 2004).

There is limited research that exists on PYD in a trade industry; this study focused on youth and adult interactions within the American Hereford Association (AHA) and how these interactions impact the development of young people. Understanding the lived experiences of the youth and adult leaders in the AHA will allow researchers to offer recommendations to help the AHA better serve their members. The target population for this research study consisted of previous and current junior board members, previous ambassadors, volunteers, and staff within the AHA.

The design of this study is a mixed methods study, specifically an explanatory sequential design (Toyon, 2021). Mixed methods approach to research combines both qualitative and quantitative data collection into one study (Molina-Azorin, 2012). Using both quantitative and qualitative methods, the results of this study indicated that participants were overall positive in their interactions with each other, specifically youth and adult interactions. Statistically significant differences were found on youth and adults' perceptions of the statement "adults are considerate of youth opinions" with adults being more positive than youth in their overall perceptions. In addition, "youth make their own decisions" was statistically significant by youth leaders with junior board members rating their perceptions slightly higher than ambassadors.

Qualitative results revealed that youth and adults felt comfortable working together and that youth believed that their voice was heard. However, there were some discrepancies in what it means to be heard as many youths felt that the adult listened to them but did not actually hear them because their ideas were not used for the event. Additionally, almost all participants did not fully understand what positive youth development is. As this research has implications for youth and adult relationships and those that work with young people, several recommendations emerged.

One of these recommendations is that adults should continue to interact positively with the youth leaders of the organization. This also includes asking the youth for their opinions which may change the youths' perceptions on what it means to be heard. It is recommended that a training occur so that all people involved in the AHA understand positive youth development concepts when working with youth. Future research is needed to determine if perceptions and thoughts change after the implementation of a training as this research was limited to only those in leadership positions in the year 2019-2023. Research to gauge youth and adults' understanding of positive youth development and concepts after a PYD training would help determine the impact of the training and their knowledge of PYD.

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Approved by:

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## **Dedication**

This dissertation is dedicated to my grandmother Geneva, and parents Mike and Donna. Thank you is not enough for everything you have done for me throughout my life. For believing in me when I was discouraged and for the kind words, the support, and love always. I will be forever grateful for the love, support, and our relationship.

# **Chapter 1 - Introduction**

## **Community Engaged Scholarship**

Kansas State University Leadership Communications PhD program is an interdisciplinary degree that is grounded in research and community engaged scholarship. An important part of the Leadership Communications PhD Program is a community engage approach to teaching, learning, and research. Doctoral students in the leadership communications PhD program engage in scholarship within the community through practice and help lead change in original research using a community engage scholarship approach.

This research is community engaged scholarship work as researchers worked with the American Hereford Association. The American Hereford Association had the desire to improve their youth-to-youth relationships within their organization. In addition, the community also wanted to understand youth and adult relationships. As a researcher, I have a connection to the American Hereford Association community. While conducting this research, I had the opportunity to work as an ambassador for the association in the summer of 2022 and have had several volunteer experiences working for a few years with their staff and employees at various livestock shows. With the Ambassador experience, I was able to immerse myself into the organization and see how youth and adults interacted within this community. The experiences of the youth leadership position allowed me to see firsthand what youth to youth and youth and adult partnerships were like to offer recommendations and provide feedback for the organization. Additionally, I have friends and family who are involved with the industry and exhibit Hereford Cattle, and I have exhibited cattle at several cattle shows both nationally and at the state level.

The American Hereford Association, selected participants for this research as they provided a list of previous junior board members, current junior board members, previous

ambassadors, and adult staff and volunteers. The Youth Activities Director for the American Hereford Association had a connection with this research as she sent out the initial email to all individuals involved with this study. All emails after the first initial email were sent by myself as the researcher and I as a researcher contacted the members for follow up interviews.

This research has implications for organizations and programs that work with youth specifically trade industries that have similar goals and ideas as that of the American Hereford Association. One should be cautious, however, to compare results of this research to other trade industry organizations that may not be as focused on youth and adult partnerships and improving positive experiences for young people.

### **Positive Youth Development**

A concept that is based around finding the strengths of adolescents driving from the Developmental Systems Theory is positive youth development (PYD) (Lerner et al., 2005a). The Developmental Systems theory Demonstrates that as a person interacts with their current context it enhances their development (Hamilton et al., 2013). In addition to the Developmental Systems Theory positive youth development is also grounded in the Ecological Systems Theory, which suggests that the development of an individual is based on their interactions in and across the context (Deurden et al., 2010). Youth and adult partnerships are an important part of a youth's environment and can have an effect on their development (Zeldin et al., 2008).

The importance of interactions that youth have within their environment such as youth and adult partnerships has been difficult for society to recognize (Zeldin et al., 2008). This is because research indicates the challenges with youth and adult partnerships rather than the positives about them (Zeldin et al., 2008). The criteria that is needed to create a successful partnership is addressed in research by Zeldin et al., (2008) and is established from theories

which allow young people to develop a sense of ownership and allow them to become a part of the organizations vision.

PYD programs such as 4-H and the National FFA Organization engage in partnerships between youth and adults (Hennes & Ball, 2019). Within 4-H and FFA the partnership is supportive and positive and there are equal opportunities for each to contribute to the organization or the community in which they belong (Serido et al., 2011). In the past, organizations like 4-H have focused on a setting in which youth are empowered through their leadership (Bading et al., 2012). Within the 4-H program, youth and adults are set up to share decision making powers which develop leadership skills in young people (Bading et al., 2012). The challenge within organizations is for adults to realize that young people should be more than just participants and become a part of the decision-making process (Zeldin et al., 2008). To be empowered, young people need to feel that their responsibilities have a meaning, their voice is allowed, and that the tasks, project or the program makes a difference in the lives of others (Spreitzer, 1995).

Youth and adult interactions are an important part of a youth and adult partnership and determine the success of the partnership (Dubois et al., 2002). Youth and adult interactions can allow young people the opportunity to be a part of action-based learning and experiences that involve decision making powers (Isreal & Ilvento, 1995). Several scholars recognize that young people need positive opportunities for youth to develop both in school and out of school setting (Bading et al., 2012; Hennes & Ball., 2019; Jones & Perkins, 2006). Pittman (2002) believes that when young people are engaged in youth-adult interactions, they are more advanced when it comes to their community. Blum (2003) indicated that programs with effective youth and adult interactions offer youth the opportunity to form relationships with caring adults. Youth are also



likely to improve in their behavioral and social characteristics while engaging in positive interactions with adults in PYD programs (Rhodes & Roffman, 2003). In addition, when youth feel adults value them in a partnership and they have a sense of belonging amongst the organization it can help them create their identity.

However, not all adults believe that youth have value, Camino (2000) suggested that with a preconceived negative stereotype of youth it hinders the youth's ability to want to be engaged with the adult. Youth then resist the adult's willingness to share power (Camino, 2000). Negative experiences can lead young people to not feel welcomed and not feel as if they have an equal voice in decision making with that of the adult (Camino, 2000). Young people need to be fully prepared to engage in their communities with adults so that they can improve their personal skills and have the potential for positive community change (Pittman, 2002).

### **Rationale**

Incorporating youth into important decisions within an organization can be a successful strategy to improve the organization's overall goal and mission. Allowing youth to become a part of the decision-making process and assist with issues may influence and be a learning process for both the adults and the youth. However, several studies have suggested that adults often perceive youth as individuals that need attention and assistance rather than the ones being able to help with the issues (Guzman et al., 2003; Zeldin et al., 2000). As youth are perceived as not being able to help with organization issues and problems, it creates a stereotype which limits the potential of decision making and interactions of young people at the organizational level (Yohalem, 2003; Yohalem & Pittman, 2001).

Although some adults may feel that youth are problematic within a community (Zeldin et al., 2000), other scholars have observed that if given the opportunity to solve issues within a

community young people can feel empowered (Flanagan & Fiason, 2001; Villarruel et al., 2003). The adult perception that youth are problematic in the community often hinders the youth's willingness to contribute to society or the organization (Irby et al., 2001). It is important for adults to find the strengths of the youth so that they can become positive attributes to the organizations. Youth and adult partnerships are essential in decreasing the perceived gap between youth and adults (Zeldin et al., 2005). Within these partnerships, positive youth development is needed.

Prior to the twentieth century many adults described youth as: rude, wild, and irresponsible (Irby et al., 2001). Lerner and Lerner (2013) found that the period of adolescence was marked with youth being viewed as at risk, unruly and needing to be fixed. However, during the latter part of the century as more research has been conducted, a new view on youth emerged. Lerner and Lerner (2013) indicated that rather than youth being viewed as irresponsible, rude, and needing to be fixed, youths' internal strengths and external assets were embraced within their environments. In addition to embracing the skills youth possessed, the development of youth was also seen as plastic, which meant that it was not fixed, and several adults realized that experiences could influence their development (Lerner & Lerner, 2013). In viewing young people as developing, an asset-based approach emerged, this was referred to as positive youth development. Positive youth development indicates that young people are not problems to be fixed, rather they need nurturing from adults so that they can make contributions to their society and help improve the lives of others (Lerner et al, 2005b). Adults can help leverage youth's strengths through interactions with people which can enhance their confidence, connection, competence, character, and compassion (Lerner et al., 2011a).

Several researchers have studied positive youth development, and youth and adult interactions in the context of 4-H and FFA (Hastings et al., 2011; Hennes & Ball, 2019). The 4-H Organization is a large youth development organization in which youth become empowered by adults to lead with skills for a lifetime (National 4-H Organization, 2023). The FFA Organization is an organization that prepares young people for leadership careers in agriculture, science, industry, and technology (National FFA Organization, 2023). However, limited research exists on how positive youth development and youth and adult partnerships are perceived in trade industry organizations and its overall impact on youth. Several questions can be asked such as, how do trade organizations develop young people and how is youth leadership formed within the organization? What do the interactions with adults look like in a positive youth development organization that promotes leadership in young people? With very limited research on how trade industry organizations demonstrate PYD, this study will focus on youth and adult interactions within the trade industry and how these interactions impact the development of young people. For the focus of this study, the American Hereford Association (AHA) is considered a trade industry organization that demonstrates youth and adult interactions as well as positive youth development. The AHA provides programs and services for members, customers, and supports youth through education and research, while promoting the Hereford breed (American Hereford Association, 2022).

### **Research Purpose**

The purpose of this research is to understand youth and adult partnerships within the American Hereford Association (AHA), understand the expectations youth and adults have of each other, and determine the knowledge individuals have of positive youth development. The AHA is committed to improving youth and adult relationships and youth to youth relationships

within their organization. As the AHA is committed to improving their organization and relationships within it, they are the system to be studied. Understanding the lived experiences and knowledge of Positive Youth Development of the junior board members, ambassadors, and the adults within the Hereford Association will allow researchers to offer recommendations to help them better serve youth and adults in their organization. The following objectives will guide this study.

1. Describe the perceptions of youth and adult interactions by those in youth leadership positions and the adult leaders in a trade industry.
2. Describe the experiences of youth and adult leaders in a leadership role within a trade industry.
3. Determine youth and adult leaders' expectations of each other when in leadership positions.
4. Determine the knowledge of positive youth development of junior board members, ambassadors, and adult leaders in a trade industry.

### **Operationalization of Constructs**

For the purposes of this research, the following terms are defined as

*Adult Involvement*- adult ages 19 and older that work within the organization to carry out specific tasks and or functions. Adults provide support and guidance to the youth.

*Adult Support*- the adult being positive role models for the youth and their willingness to accept and nurture youth development.

*Ambassador*- any individual that serves a three weeklong internship to assist the National Junior Hereford Association and the American Hereford Association (American Hereford Association, 2022).

*Junior Board-* individuals who serve a three-year term and assist in governing the 3,800 member junior organization (American Hereford Association, 2022).

*American Hereford Association Staff* – an individual that works full time for the American Hereford Association.

*Adult Volunteer for the American Hereford Association-* participants of this study that include any individual 19 years of age and older that interacts regularly with the Junior Board members, Ambassadors, or adult staff in the American Hereford Association. The adult volunteers of the American Hereford Association in this research include those that belong to the American Hereford Women, state advisors, and serve in a volunteer role on the Senior Board of Directors, or have volunteered their time helping the association in some capacity.

*Civility-* the politeness, courtesy, and behaviors one demonstrates in conversation and speech.

*Community Obligation-* youth and adults have an interest in and a commitment to helping the community improve.

*Decision Making-* An individual's perceptions on making choices for themselves rather than the adult.

*Knowledge-* the facts, information, and skills acquired by a person through their experiences and or education.

*Mutual Learning-* youth and adults learn together in their leadership roles and help each other develop skills.

*Mutual Respect-* Youth and adults are respectful of each other and their opinions, not only youth and adult relationships but youth to youth relationships. Mutual respect also means how considerate youth are of their peers' opinions and ideas.

*Youth-* participants of this study which include junior board members and ambassadors who have served in a leadership role for the American Hereford Association. Youth participants are emerging adults, which are characterized by individuals ages 18-25. The emerging adult is composed of a life stage in which there are changes in the individual's emotional, cognitive, and social domains as well as physical domain of the individual.

*Youth Adult Interaction-* An interaction in which youth and adults influence each other while working together and positively in the organization. An interaction is defined as “a transaction between two entities, typically an exchange of information, but can also be an exchange of goods or services” (Saffer, 2010, p. 4). For the purposes of this study, interaction is identified the same as a relationship which describes the connection between two or more people, and how two or more people behave and act towards each other sharing and exchanging information (Open Education Sociology Dictionary, 2023).

*Youth Responsibilities-* A youth's duties, job, and tasks that should be carried out within the organization and the youth's ability to carry out the task.

*Youth Voice-* the opportunity for a youth to express their thoughts, ideas and share their concerns within the organization they are a part of (Serido et al., 2011).

### **Limitations and Possibilities of the Study**

There are several interests in learning about youth development and the development of young people into leaders. Opportunities for young people to grow and develop into leaders is greater than ever (Redmond & Dolan, 2016). Allowing youth to participate in decisions within the organization allows the organization to experience the energy and vitality of the young people, which can in turn positively affect the organization's mission and goals (Redmond & Dolan, 2016). Programs that offer youth the opportunity to lead, offer them the ability to learn

leadership skills and communication skills that will benefit them in the future (Redmond & Dolan, 2016). This research will allow the American Hereford Association to discover ways in which their young people can work together for more positive interactions. Positive interactions will build teamwork skills, increase youth participation, and develop young people into leaders. “It is vital [...] that young people are exposed to the opportunities that enable them to experience leadership as well as opportunities that build their desire to become leaders” (Redmond & Dolan, 2016, p. 263).

This study is restricted to the survey results of the ambassadors, junior board members, volunteers, and adult staff within the American Hereford Association specifically those that retired from leadership roles in the year 2019-2023. The junior board members that were elected by their peers in 2016 to 2021 are included in this research as the junior board members leadership role is three years. The interview responses are also limited to those individuals that participated in the interviews and their responses and observations made during the interview process. This study was conducted after the COVID 19 pandemic, and it was made clear to participants that this was a non-COVID-19 study.

### **Dissertation Organization**

This dissertation is organized into five chapters. Chapter one is an introduction to the study including research purpose, questions, operational definitions, limitations, and possibilities of the study. Chapter two is a review of the literature in the context of youth development, 5 C's of positive youth development, The Search Institutes Developmental Relationships, factors that contribute to youth development programs, Youth and Adult Partnerships, youth perception of adults, adult perception of youth, leadership, adult and youth leadership, youth leadership

curriculum model, and the youth leadership development conceptual model. The theoretical framework is also included in Chapter two.

Chapter three includes research methodology, rigor trustworthiness, data sources and collection of the data as well as interview instrument and protocol and data analysis. Chapter four includes research findings, descriptions of the participants and detailed excerpts from the interviews. Chapter five includes an interpretation of the findings and presentation of the conclusions along with the implications and recommendations for further research.

## **Conclusion**

Incorporating youth voice into community organizations has the potential to positively impact the organization as well as the individuals themselves. Youth and adult partnerships have been studied in numerous community organizations such as 4-H, which is a large youth development organization in which youth become empowered by adults to lead with skills for their lifetime (National 4-H organization, 2023). Youth and adult partnerships have also been studied in the National FFA Organization an organization that prepares young people for leadership and careers in agriculture, science, industry, and technology (National FFA Organization, 2023) but what about other community organizations such as a livestock industry? How do these individuals promote leadership and establish positive youth development? Developing young people into leaders and providing them with opportunities is vital (Redmond & Dolan, 2016). It is important that one considers the work that volunteers and organizations do with their young people as they have the potential to develop them into great leaders. Youth organizations enable young people to build on their capacity and contribute to their organizations now and in the future (Redmond & Dolan, 2016). Kahn et al. (2009) indicated that by incorporating youth as leaders within an organization it can set positive examples and inspire



young people within the local community. The interactions of youth and adults can develop young people and have positive impacts for themselves and for their communities (Kahn et al., 2009). There is no single way to develop young people into leaders and several practices can be of benefit (Kahn et al., 2009).

This study seeks to describe the interactions youth and adults have in the American Hereford Association. In addition to understanding the knowledge of youth development and describing the lived experiences of the junior board members, ambassadors, and adult leaders in the association. This research will allow the American Hereford Association to see the impact that they have on young people as well as make suggestions as to how they can improve youth and adult interactions and peer to peer interactions. Finally, this research will indicate how well the youth and adults communicate, and their perceptions of the interactions with each other. Understanding the perceptions of the junior board members, ambassadors as well as the expectations that the adults have for the youth will allow researchers to offer recommendations to improve their youth and adult interactions and peer to peer interactions, which will better serve the youth within the organization.

## **Chapter 2 - Literature Review**

### **Positive Youth Development**

This chapter contains a literature review on Positive Youth Development. There are several components of positive youth development that are important for youth and adult interactions. This chapter describes many of the components of positive youth development and describes leadership in the context of organizations and its importance for youth.

As mentioned in chapter one a concept that is based around finding strengths of adolescence deriving from the Developmental Systems Theory is positive youth development. Positive Youth Development (PYD) is demonstrated in youth when the “potential plasticity of human development is aligned with the developmental assets” (Lerner et al. 2005a, p. 10). Positive youth development is a vision for promoting healthy development of young people by addressing their strengths through their academic research and their voices (Lerner et al., 2005a). One key aspect of PYD is plasticity. Plasticity refers to the potential for youth to have changes throughout their life. These prospective changes can then affect how they develop and if they are not fixed can have a big influence on youth (Lerner, 2006, Lerner & Lerner., 2013).

Many adults believe that adolescence ages 10- 19, can be rough years as drugs, alcohol, school failures and dropping out of school can be common, Lerner et al., (2005b) believes that these problems can be managed while the youth is developing. Utilizing a variety of ideas around plasticity during adolescence and the ways in which children learn, develop, and grow framed the concept of PYD. Positive youth development demonstrates young people as helpful resources rather than someone that is struggling with challenges (Lerner et al., 2005b; Lerner et al., 2006).

There are various ways in which PYD can be utilized, this includes as a “developmental process, a philosophy approach to youth programming, [and] [...] [through] youth programs and

organizations focused on fostering [the] healthy [...] development of youth” (Hamilton, 1999; Lerner et al, 2011a). Several models, such as the 5C’s of Positive Youth Development and Developmental Relationship Framework, help explain the adolescence period (Benson et al., 2011; Damon, 2004; Lerner et al., 2011a). These models help explain the “relational developmental systems” (Lerner & Lerner, 2013, p.10) where a development of youth involves the relations between people and their context.

### **5’Cs of Youth Development**

The five C’s of positive youth development (See Table 2.1) include competence, confidence, connection, character, and caring. If young people engage positively in all of the five C’s they are on their way to developing the sixth C which is contribution. If a young person does not display all of the six C’s they would potentially be at a higher risk to engage in unwanted behaviors that would affect them both socially and mentally (Lerner & Lerner, 2013).

**Table 2.1. Definitions of the Five C’s Framework of Youth Development**

C	Definition
<b>Competence</b>	A person’s actions and views about certain areas including, academic, social, cognitive and skills. Some competence can be interpersonal skills.
<b>Confidence</b>	A person’s positive self-worth and efficacy.
<b>Connection</b>	Bonds and relationships between people and their exchanges in communication made. This includes families, schools, communities, and any groups or individuals that contribute to one another.
<b>Caring</b>	Having empathy towards others
<b>Character</b>	A person’s moral judgement and cultural norms, their judgement of right and wrong behaviors and their integrity.

**Contribution\*** The contributions that one makes to their family and the civil society/ community.

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Note. \* The 6<sup>th</sup> C adapted later, after youth demonstrate all of the 5 C's of development. Adapted from The Positive Development of youth: Comprehensive Findings from the 4-H study of Positive youth development by Lerner and Lerner (2013) [www.4-h.org/about=4=H/Reserch/PYDWave-9-2013.dwn](http://www.4-h.org/about=4=H/Reserch/PYDWave-9-2013.dwn) and “What exactly is a youth development program? Answers from research and practice by Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2003, Journal of Applied Developmental Science, 7(2), 94-111, [https://doi/10.1207/S1532480XADS0702\\_6](https://doi/10.1207/S1532480XADS0702_6)

Resistance to unwanted behaviors is not an easy task, as many youths do not know how to resist the temptation of unwanted behaviors (Lerner et al., 2011a). This means that some youth do not have the ‘plasticity’ from their schools, or environment and lack the resources to help them learn resistance behaviors (Lerner et al., 2011a). Many believe that activities that are based around the 6 Cs of development will help guide youth into the right path and become successful (Benson et al., 2006; Lerner et al., 2005a).

Changing the lives of youth is seen as a positive strength that can build the 6 C's of development. Parents, peers, and adult mentors can help guide and change the life paths of youth and it is important that adults remain positive. The context of a youth such as where they learn, play, and live can all impact their development (Lerner et al., 2005b).

## **Developmental Relationships**

The Search Institute (2020) has identified framework on a developmental relationship. Developmental relationships are relationships that allow young people to thrive and be resilient regardless of their upbringing (Search Institute, 2020). In a developmental relationship both parties experience and provide the actions and the relationship is bidirectional (Search Institute, 2020). Developmental relationships offer young people the opportunity to learn how to interact and engage in conversations while contributing to the world around them (Search Institute, 2020). Although developmental relationships are an important aspect in the lives of young people, the Search Institute (2020) indicates that developmental relationships are often a missed

opportunity by many young people because of biases, prejudices, gender, income, race, and other differences. Young people need to experience and have developing relationships so that they can be supported and successful in their life (Search Institute, 2020). The Developmental Relationships Framework consists of five elements, with 20 specific actions that will make relationships impactful in young people's lives (Search Institute, 2020). These five elements include express care, challenge growth, provide support, share power, and expand possibilities.

The first element, express care indicates that within the relationship both parties should show that they care to be in that relationship and show each other that they matter (Search Institute, 2020). Within the 'express care' element, actions include being dependable and demonstrating trust. In addition, listening and paying attention to each other while in a relationship indicates expressing care (Search Institute, 2020). In a developmental relationship, both parties should feel valued and respected (Search Institute, 2020). Other actions within express care element include 'being warm' by showing that you care to be around that person and using words of encouragement while in the relationship (Search Institute, 2020).

The second element is to challenge growth in the relationship (Search Institute, 2020). Within a youth and adult relationship, both youth and adults should be accountable for their actions, as well as learn from their mistakes (Search Institute, 2020). Other actions include growing and learning with each other and always expecting the best from each other (Search Institute, 2020).

The third element of developmental relationships includes providing support (Search Institute, 2020). Within the relationship both youth and adults should help each other complete tasks and achieve goals (Search Institute, 2020). To do this, the youth need the adult to help them set boundaries and the adult needs to be able to set boundaries for the youth. Both youth and

adults should empower each other and navigate through any challenges that may arise within the relationship (Search Institute, 2020). While the adult should also empower the young person to reach their potential by allowing the youth to build confidence in their actions and take charge (Search Institute, 2020).

The fourth element in the developmental relationship's framework includes sharing power (Search Institute, 2020). Within the relationship it is important that youth and adults work together on important decisions within the organization. The adults should also let the young people lead or create the ability for the young person to lead within the organization (Search Institute, 2020). Additionally, collaborating, being respectful of each other and treating each other fairly are important within a developmental relationship (Search Institute, 2020).

The fifth element of a developmental relationship is expanding possibilities (Search Institute, 2020). Expanding possibilities allows both youth and adults to be connected and expand their horizons. While in a relationship, connecting each other to resources allows each other to grow and develop as well as inspire to see future possibilities (Search Institute, 2020).

### **Factors that Contribute to Positive Youth Development Programs**

Lerner (2007) and Lerner (2006) identified three factors that aide in PYD programming, these three factors are referred to as the "Big Three". These include; positive youth and adult relationships, programs that build life skills, and that the life skills can be utilized as a participant in the program or as a leader within the community (Lerner, 2007; Lerner, 2006).

Several programs contribute to PYD aspects that build life skills. When a program consists of positive youth development, they instill attributes in young people such as character, self-efficacy, resilience, confidence, and social connections. Positive youth development programs also contribute to the empowerment of an individual or youth. Positive youth

development programs promote positive youth and adult partnerships by including increased opportunities for youth and adults to participate in social activities. (Lerner & Lerner., 2013).

Positive youth development programs also engage in youth and adult partnerships. Blum (2003) indicated that programs with effective youth and adult partnerships offer youth activities that form relationships with caring adults. Youth are also likely to improve in their behavioral and social characteristics while engaging in positive youth development organizations (Rhodes and Roffman, 2003).

One example of an organization that embraces positive youth development practices is the American Hereford Association. Youth development organizations like the American Hereford Association focus on building life skills which youth learn as they participate in leadership programs (Seevers et al., 1995). The National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA) develops young people through educational programs, like the National Junior Hereford Expo, the Faces of Leadership Conference, Building on Leadership Development Conference, and the Fed Steer Shootout (American Hereford Association, 2022). Through these programs and the junior board's diverse experience, the NJHA develops a meaningful approach to education. Through an extension partnership with the Hereford Youth Foundation of America, the NJHA can provide educational opportunities for several junior members across the country as well as scholarships. The opportunities encourage the young person's development by allowing them to be recognized, rewarding them for their development of life skills and values so that they can be the next generation of leaders (American Hereford Association, 2022).

### **Youth and Adult Partnerships**

The idea of youth and adult partnerships is derived from Lofquist (1989), who theorized a typology that assessed adult attitudes while working with youth on programs. During this time,

youth were viewed more as objects and resources. In more recent years, youth have been considered as a partner in which they should have the opportunities to develop and be able to have the decision-making power similar to adults (Camino, 2000). The National Commission on Resources for Youth (1976) define youth participation as “involving youth in responsible, challenging action, that meets genuine needs with opportunity for planning and or decision-making affecting others in an activity whose impact or consequences extend to others, outside or beyond the youth participants themselves” (p.25). The National Commission on Resources for Youth (1974) indicated that youth participation is a partnership where there is mutual learning that both age groups (youth and the adult) see themselves as a resource for the other and both offer something to the relationship. Mutual learning is essential for the youth and adult partnership and for the development of youth (Camino, 2000).

Spencer et al., (2006) believed that youth and adult partnerships are an important aspect of the development of youth for their health, psychological development, and well-being. Youth benefit from having caring adults in their life that are not just within their families but also other adults that are outside of their own families (Scales, 2006). Youth and adult partnerships formed outside of the family is important because it teaches “a broader sense of responsibility for all young people” (Scales, 2003, p. 190-191). Teaching responsibility in youth is an important aspect so that they can make positive contributions to their communities. When youth make contributions to their communities, they feel confident, and a sense of empowerment from adults (Zeldin et al., 2017). When youth feel a sense of competency and treated with high expectations from the adults they thrive developmentally (Hamilton et al., 2013). These positive outcomes of youth thriving are because of an equal voice, power, and competency between the youth and the adult. O’Donoghue and Strobel (2007) indicated that adults “helped youth recognize their power



by providing feedback about what was possible and about their work potential” (p. 478). Adults can also help youth reach their full potential by giving them a voice in choices, and can help youth think strategically and have a sense of empowerment among their communities (Larson & Angus, 2011). Youth are more likely to flourish and thrive when they can act upon their own decisions, and when they trust the adult in the relationship (Zeldin et al., 2017).

Youth and adult interactions can benefit a youth’s development because youth have the ability to practice skills, adopt new responsibilities, and learn values, along with taking action with others (Zeldin et al., 2017). When youth are given a voice in the activity or the program there is an increase in the youth’s positive development (Ramey et al., 2017). When in a youth and adult partnership, young people can learn skills in leadership, decision-making, teamwork, communication, and public speaking (Howe et al., 2011). The benefits of a youth and adult partnership include that youth gain interpersonal skills, and work collaboratively with others (Howe et al., 2011). When youth voice is heard and a positive partnership is formed within a organization youth gain confidence in their ability and feel as if they gain connections at the community level (Kraus et al., 2014). Larsen and Angus (2011) believed that youth in a positive youth and adult partnership demonstrate higher cognitive and emotional development. In this study, Larsen, and Angus (2011) found that youth increased their self-focus, attention and strategic thinking on certain tasks when they participated in a positive youth and adult partnership. The research concluded that when youth and adults are given the opportunity to be a part of the real world challenges their skills develop.

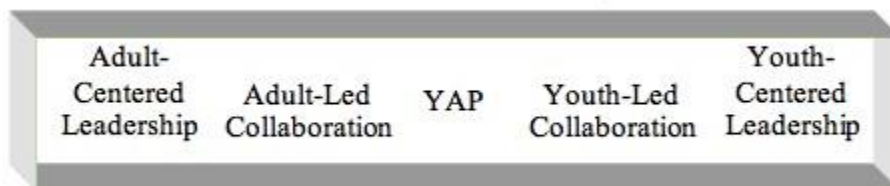
In addition, youth who are engaged in partnerships and have expressed their voice, increase their identity development (Ramey et al., 2017). Larson and Angus (2011) believe that when in youth and adult partnerships either adult led or youth led, youth still get benefits, but

their skills are different. In a youth led program, youth learned leadership skills and felt empowered whereas in an adult led program youth learned more technical skills and gained interpersonal skills. While youth and adult partnerships have benefits for youth development, Ramey et al., (2017) suggest that it depends on the organization and how youth interact.

## **Youth and Adult Continuum**

Youth and adult partnerships can be displayed in the Continuum of Youth and Adult Relationships (See Figure 2.1) that was developed by Jones (2004). This continuum includes five areas that determine the various levels of youth and adult partnerships. The first level is the adult centered leadership, the next levels are adult led collaboration, youth and adult partnerships, youth led collaboration, and youth centered leadership. The continuum model focuses on youth voices and their choices and allows the organizations to exist regardless of the youth and adult level of engagement. (Jones & Perkins, 2006; Jones & Perkins, 2005).

**Figure 2.1. Continuum of Youth and Adult Partnerships**



Note. Youth and Adult Continuum Scale from “Determining the quality of Youth and Adult Relationships within a Community based youth program” by K.R. Jones and D.F. Perkins, 2005, *Journal of Extension*, 43(5), p. 3 (<https://archives.joe.org/joe/2005october/a5.php>).

## **Adult Centered Leadership**

Nahavandi (2000) defined leadership as the interaction between a leader and followers in a situation. Adult-centered leadership on the continuum consists of programs that are driven only by adults (Jones 2004; Jones & Perkins, 2005). Many of these activities are school related activities, or other types of formal education in which the adult leads the youth. Within the adult centered approach, adults lead the activities with little or no youth voice (Jones, 2004). The

youth only act as participants and are not allowed to implement any voice (Jones & Perkins, 2005). Examples of an adult centered leadership is a classroom in which the adult teaches the youth and the youth do not have any say in what is being taught or any role in the implementation of the lesson (Jones & Perkins, 2006).

### **Adult Led Collaboration**

In adult-led collaboration on the continuum, the adult provides some guidance for the youth during programs and activities and there is more interaction between the youth and the adult than in an adult centered leadership activity (Jones, 2004). With adult led collaboration there is some input from the youth, and some adult mentoring happens (Jones, 2004). Mentoring between youth and adults provides them with the ability to share ideas which allows the adult to remain in power, yet the relationships can still be a success (Jones, 2004; Jones & Perkins, 2005; Jones & Perkins, 2006). An example of an adult led collaboration is when a youth activities coordinator provides youth with options for the location of a leadership retreat. Prior to offering youth the locations, the adult has reviewed places and determined the best options and provides them to the youth (Jones & Perkins, 2005).

### **Youth and Adult Partnerships**

A youth and adult partnership are in the center of the continuum. In a youth and adult partnership equal status in decision making, carrying out tasks, and utilizing skills among both youth and adults is achieved (Jones, 2004; Jones & Perkins, 2005). In a youth and adult partnership, both youth and adults learn from each other and there is a balance of youth and adult interaction (Jones, 2004). Youth and adult partnerships are a collaborative effort between youth and adults in which a partnership is formed (Jones, 2004; Jones & Perkins, 2006), and as time goes on the partnership is eventually mutual. An example of a youth and adult partnership is a

youth livestock clinic in which youth go to the local adult livestock board and ask for assistance both financially and for ideas on how to put on the clinic. The youth help organize the clinic and help create sessions with the guidance of the adult. The adults could assist in the planning as well and help with the financial costs.

### **Youth Led Collaborations**

A project that is youth led is where youth make the decisions and develop the ideas. A project that is youth led is a project in which youth realize the need for something in the community, develop and test the idea, and then implement it with very little input from the adult (Jones 2004; Jones & Perkins, 2006). The youth in a youth led collaboration project would design and implement the project to address the issue, adults would provide little guidance with the evaluation process (Jones, 2004). With the youth led collaboration, as youth design, implement and carry out the project it is still important that youth get assistance from adults to make sure the project is a success and is complete (Jones, 2004).

### **Youth centered Leadership.**

Youth centered leadership is the far right of the continuum. Jones (2004) indicates that a youth centered leadership project is a project in which the youth receive no adult assistance or involvement. When the adult becomes a part of the project the project shifts to a youth led collaboration partnership (Jones, 2004). A youth centered leadership program is often not as structured because of the missing adult assistance (Jones, 2004). Youth centered leadership activities include youth meetings on a school project, or a program that involves only youth members (Jones & Perkins, 2005).

## **Youth Perception of Adults**

Several studies have focused on youth's perceptions of adults when working together in community efforts (Bading et al., 2012; Bowers et al., 2016; Jones, 2004; Price & Been, 2018a). Price and Been (2018a) conducted a pilot study with nine youth and nine adults that assessed the impact of youth and adult partnerships in preparing to plan a community-based sporting event. The meetings between youth and adults occurred during the youth's physical education class at their high school. All youth participants ranged in age from 14-18 and were all female. During the first few meetings both youth and adults contributed ideas to plan the community-based sporting event (Price & Been, 2018a). Interviews with both youth and adults were held before and after the event and were conducted in a focus group setting. These focus group sessions were 30-45 minutes, questions during the interview asked participants about their feelings toward working with adults during the planning sessions. The adults were also asked their feelings toward working with the youth. The study concluded that 'adult equals leader' which was a theme that emerged from the youth that participated. The nine youth in the study commented on how the adults would control the program planning process. This study also revealed that the youth participants felt that the adults looked down on the youth as if they were children, in addition the adults were 'rarely nice' (Price & Been, 2018a). The youth also felt that the adults in the study did not listen to their ideas or suggestions.

Price and Been (2018a) indicated that there were strong consistent feelings about how the adults treated the youth. The adults viewed themselves as being more in control and as the older figure. However, this study concluded that there were shifts in the adults' perceptions of youth at the end of the study. In their initial meetings, the youth felt that adults would make decisions for them, and their thoughts and suggestions were overlooked. One participant

explained that when she gave a suggestion, and her ideas were overlooked it made her feel as if she should not contribute ideas (Price & Been, 2018a). The more the youth and adults worked together, it was a unanimous feeling from the youth that the adults finally included them in the planning process. Price and Been (2018a) believed that this may have been because after time the adults got to know the youth. Once the youth felt understood by the adults and that the adults valued their opinions, as well as their connection to the community, the youth felt that the adults listened to them. This study concluded by stating that when youth had their voices heard and recognized, it built confidence that their input with the project mattered (Price & Been, 2018a).

Although this pilot study included low numbers it is important to understand the context that the young people viewed themselves when working with adults. As youth are generally taught that the leader is in control, they felt inferior going into the partnership which hindered the ability to establish a co-partnership when planning the event (Price & Been, 2018a). Mutual understanding and acceptance of each other prior to community engagement will help young people to not feel inferior and allow the youth to view the adults as role models (Price & Been, 2018a).

Bowers et al. (2016) interviewed 23 emerging adults ages 18-25, on their perceptions of their own leadership development. The results of this revealed a role model driven framework which concluded that a youth's motivation to lead was driven by the adult role models. In the study, the youth felt that when adults displayed trust, respected, and listened to them they were able to build a stronger connection and perceive their own leadership as positive. In addition, when the role models displayed professional work ethics, and positive character traits, the youth felt more confidence in their ability and perceived the adults as someone they could model. The study concluded that adult role models or any adult in the lives of youth can provide the energy

and motivation towards the organization and the commitment when there are positive characteristics (Bowers et al., 2016). Youth learn best from those individuals that display positive leadership characteristics. Positive leadership characteristics provide the groundwork for a positive youth and adult partnership. When the adult lacks the confidence and the motivation it can hinder the youth's knowledge of opportunities and their confidence (Bowers et al., 2016).

Similarly, to Bowers et al., (2016) Christens and Dolan (2011) interviewed 20 individuals ages 16-20 from Inland Congregations United for Change (ICUC) an organization that engages people in community change through faith-based institutions in California. This study researched community and individual impacts of effectiveness of organizing and their process of organizing that has been effective. Within these interviews various topics included questions about community organizing, research, relationships, and education. Many youths in the study felt that the adults had low expectations of the youth and that the 'adult was in power' which led the youth to be irritated (Christens & Dolan, 2011). The youth also felt that the adults were condescending, and they did not take the youth seriously. Like the work of Price and Been (2018a) once the youth kept working with the adults, overtime the youth felt that the adults seem to change their opinions and attitudes about them (Christens & Dolan, 2011). The longer the individuals were in an interaction, the youth felt as if they mattered, and the adults believed they were talking to youth that cared about the subject and were concerned with what was going on. Youth also began to see that the adults that were in power wanted to interact with youth. Similar to Price and Been (2018a) the more the youth interacted with adults in the organization, they understood each other, and it built stronger relationships which helped both youth and adults to see each other's potential (Christens & Dolan, 2011).

A study conducted by Bading et al., (2012) on how youth were treated by adult members of a youth board in 31 counties of The Texas AgriLife Extension Service, found that both male and female participants had positive thoughts and feelings towards working with adults in the organization. Bading et al., (2012) used the Involvement and Interaction Rating Scale (Jones, 2004) to identify the perceptions of how youth perceived working with adults. Youth revealed positive thoughts of working with adults within the Extension system. Youth perceived themselves as having a voice, decision-making power as well as having responsibilities while serving on the board. On a scale of 1-10, with 1 being low and 10 being high, youth rated themselves on their ability to make decisions as 7.81 meaning that adults allowed them to be involved in the decision-making process. This study concluded that within Extension, specifically in Texas, youth that participate in Extension boards experience leadership roles, which allows them to be effective leaders and provided them with organization responsibilities (Bading et al, 2012).

Jones (2004) developed the Involvement and Interaction Rating scale for his study on the perceptions of youth and adults when working together on community-based youth programs. The (Jones 2004) study included a convenience sample of youth and adults in an evaluation study of Engaging Youth Servicing Community Initiative of a Northeast 4-H Region State Cooperative Extension Service (EYSC). The EYSC targets rural communities to provide them with opportunities for youth and adult partnerships. Participants in this study included 55 youth and 53 adults. All the participants felt great about their involvement in the organization and their interactions with each other. Jones (2004) indicted that although there was no significance found, adults were more positive than youth when working together. Further, rural participants tended to be more positive in their interactions with youth, adults, and youth and adult interactions than



urban groups. Youth also did not perceive themselves as having a positive partnership with high levels of youth involvement and youth adult interactions. The youth felt as though their opinions and voices were not as valued as much as the adults thought they valued the youth opinions. Furthermore, the youth also did not feel that they had a voice in the decision-making process and decision-making roles, even though the adults felt that they were giving youth roles and decision-making roles. Jones (2004) indicated that although the adults felt they were giving young people a voice in the decision-making process, and respecting them, more training may be needed to allow the adults to understand what entails a successful youth and adult partnership.

### **Adults Perception of Youth**

There are several existing studies that focus on youths' opinions on adults (Jones, 2004; Price & Been, 2018b, Zeldin & Topitzes, 2002), they also included adults' perceptions and beliefs about working with young people. Some studies indicate that adults believe that youth are different than what they have been in the past and that they reject the American traditional values (Jones & Perkins, 2006). Although some believe that youth are problematic and needing to be fixed, some studies have accurately shown the potential that young people can have within a community (Zeldin & Topitzes, 2002). Zeldin and Topitzes (2002) found that when adults felt safe in their neighborhoods, they would be more likely to feel that a young person could be a decision maker within that community. This research concluded that when people feel safe within their neighborhood, they find that people are much more influential than the stereotypes of what people perceive.

Additionally, some adults believe that youth should be given the opportunity to assist and make communities safer. The Search Institute (2002) surveyed 1425 Americans on their perceptions and actions they felt were most important to young people. Within these actions,

many adults (48%) felt that opportunities should exist for youth to improve the community. In this research, only 25% of those adults reached out for the opinions of youth when needing assistance on community or organization efforts (Jones, 2004; The Search Institute, 2002).

In the previous pilot study mentioned by Price & Been (2018a) adult reflections of youth were also noted and positive. In the pilot study nine adults participated in the partnership with young people to help plan a recreation program at a college. Adults were asked to work with youth to help plan a Health, Physical Education and Recreation program at a Historically Black College and University (HBCU) (Price & Been, 2018b). All the adults had some type of experience managing and planning a recreational event. The study consisted of pre and post focus group sessions, that were held with only adults. Questions during the pre-partnership included, explain an approach to leadership, and how do you feel about youth and adult partnerships, as well as defining the strengths and weaknesses of a youth and adult partnership. In addition, the post partnership focus group included asking the adult participants if they learned anything from working with the youth, and how they felt they were a leader in the partnership (Price & Been, 2018b).

There were several themes that had emerged from this study, but the major focus was on the enhancement of youth voice. Several adults believed that working with the youth allowed them to enjoy themselves and be youthful in the environment (Price & Been, 2018b). In addition, adults viewed the relationship as positive because it allowed them to share a responsibility rather than having to do the work all themselves. Price and Been (2018b) also indicated that the adults felt that the youth brought something out in them when working with them in a partnership role, and this partnership might have allowed them to do something beyond what they realized they could do. Adults also realized that during the partnership they learned a lot about themselves and

how to handle situations. Adults also believed that because they were in the youths' community that the youth had more suggestions and knew the community the best. Adults wanted youth voice as they felt that the youth could teach the adults something and get a different viewpoint and they encouraged different viewpoints and perspectives. Even though the adults looked for the youth to provide a perspective, the adults realized that the youth saw the adults as in power and in control which became a setback for the project (Price & Been, 2018b). The adults however felt that youth could take part in the project and offered them the opportunity to be a part of the work. Adults would model the work for the youth and then the youth would do the work themselves. The authors conclude by saying that adults valued working with the youth during the project even if the youth felt that the adult was in power (Price & Been, 2018) .

Bading et al., (2016) also addressed adult perceptions of youth while working on a Youth Board in Texas AgriLife Extension. The population consisted of adults in 31 counties all of which worked with youth on a youth board. This study found that the overall mean score of adults' perception of working with youth was 7.79, which meant that the adults felt good about working with the youth on the board. Interestingly, the highest mean score (8.47) was the statement that indicated youth have an equal vote in the decision-making process. Adults felt that they encouraged youth to come up with their own ideas and supported them in their decisions. This was indicated because the lowest mean score was the statement, 'adults never totally take over everything when working on projects and activities' which had a mean score of 6.92. Bading et al, (2016) concluded that although adults do take charge within an organization, it is important that adults are considerate of the youths' input even if it is different than their own. If programs are planning both youth and adult input, it is important that adults are properly trained on how to include youth voice and their input. Including youth voice and their input will allow

both the adults and the youth to have a stronger relationship which builds a stronger society (Bading et al., 2016; Jones & Perkins, 2005).

In the study conducted by Jones (2004), adults' perceptions while working with youth on community-based youth programs were also noted. The population consisted of adults that were part of the Engaging Youth Servicing Community Initiative of a Northeast 4-H Regional State Cooperative Extension Service. Fifty-three adults were part of this study who rated their overall perceptions when working with youth on projects. In this study, adult leaders of the organizations were asked to categorize their youth and adult partnership into three categories from the Youth and Adult Continuum (Jones & Perkins, 2006). These categories included, adult led collaboration, youth and adult partnerships, and youth led collaboration. The adults in this study that categorized their group into youth and adult partnerships had more positive perceptions of youth involvement (mean score of 7.85) than those groups that were categorized as adult led collaboration (mean score of 6.64). Furthermore, the adults that categorized their group in the youth adult partnerships had more positive perceptions of youth and adult interactions (mean score of 7.69) than those adults that were in adult led collaborations group (mean score 6.63). The adults in the youth and adult partnership category believed that they did have a genuine partnership with the youth, but the youth opinions differed. Jones and Perkins (2006) believed that by bringing youth and adults together it can create trust and allow them to get to know one another which could create a decrease in the negative perceptions among the groups.

## **Leadership**

Leadership is a concept that is used in many different approaches to facilitate a change and is used with management and authority (Redmond & Dolan, 2016). There are several

definitions of leadership which include the leader as the center of a group and helps change an activity. Northouse (2004) indicated that “leadership is a process, leadership involves influence, leadership occurs within a group context and leadership involves goal attainment” (p. 262). Through this definition, leadership is a process and individuals influence another group or other individuals to achieve success (Northouse, 2004). In addition to Northouse (2004), Chemers (2002) suggested that leadership is the “process of social influence in which one person can enlist the aid and support of others in the accomplishment of a common task” (Redmond & Dolan, 2016, p. 262). Leadership characteristics are shown when someone is humble, self-aware, builds trust, and builds ethical morals (Whitehead, 2009).

If young people engage in leadership opportunities it will allow them to become influential in their businesses, community, and potential future careers (Redmond & Dolan, 2016). When young people become leaders, they will be mindful of their consequences, and their actions as well as the ability to see the future for potential change and actions needed. While being a leader in the American Hereford Association, young people can acquire the skills necessary to become influential in their futures specifically with adult guidance.

## **Adult and Youth Leadership**

### **Youth Leadership**

There are differences in youth leadership as compared to adult leadership. Redmond and Dolan (2016) indicated that youth leadership “focuses on the methods by which leadership can be explored, taught, or experienced by young people” (Redmond & Dolan, 2016, p. 262). Youth leadership allows young people to learn as they go or learn by doing which utilizes Dewey’s Experiential Learning model. Within youth leadership, youth develop and are able to apply skills in meaningful ways (MacNeil, 2006). While youth are learning skills the skills are helping them

for future, rather than just making decisions and actions at the present moment (Dolan, 2010; Kahn et al., 2009; Redmond & Dolan, 2014). Young people can acquire leadership skills in several aspects including youth development, citizenship, youth action, and youth engagement (Redmond & Dolan, 2016). It is important that youth learn leadership skills from various opportunities which enable them to become leaders in the future and contribute to something that is meaningful. The American Hereford Association, for example, develops young people into leaders through their leadership conferences held annually each year, which allow youth to participate in sessions that enhance their learning and develop skills for future (American Hereford Association, 2022). The sessions expose young people to opportunities in the industry and leadership conferences cultivate communication skills, encourage teamwork, and focus on individual development.

### **Adult Leadership**

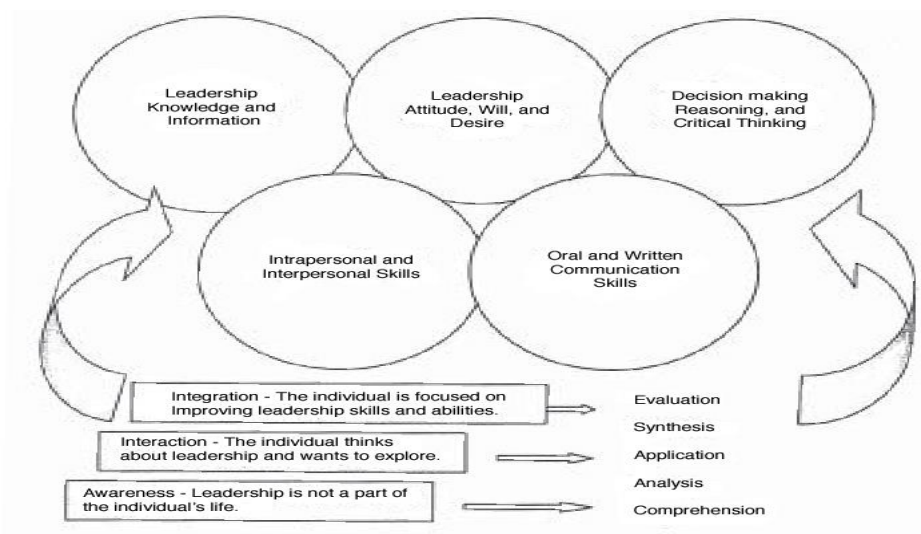
Youth leadership allows young people to acquire the skills they need to practice leadership in the future. Adult leadership is different in that leadership is practiced in the current context (MacNeil, 2006). MacNeil (2006) indicated that although leadership focuses on the adult's ability to influence it also focuses on authority, which includes decision making power, how should and how does someone influence action, and applying those in a real-life situation. MacNeil (2006) suggested that some leadership literature would indicate that leadership has a dual focus which includes the ability and the authority which are both needed for leadership. Whereas youth leadership is more focused on the ability and the learning how to lead rather than applying leadership in real life (MacNeil, 2006). Within the American Hereford Association, adult leaders teach leadership skills and communications to the youth, but it is up to the youth to experience and act out leadership roles on their own. While serving as a junior board member for

the American Hereford Association, young people are given the opportunity to act on leadership and practice leadership prior to their careers and futures. MacNeil (2006) suggested that “leadership is a relational process combining ability (knowledge, skills, and talents) with authority (voice, influence, and decision-making power) to positively influence and impact diverse individuals, organizations and communities” (p. 37). Youth activity directors, coordinators, and staff within the American Hereford Association, direct and have authority over the junior board members and other young people within the Hereford Association, while allowing youth to voice their opinions the final say comes to the adults for action.

### **Youth Leadership Curriculum Model**

All people have the potential for leadership, but some do not understand it (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002). There are many definitions of leadership, VanLinden & Fertman (1998) posit that in a leadership role a person thinks for themselves, are able to communicate thoughts, help others as well as influence them in a responsible way. VanLinden & Fertman (1998) described leadership in three stages and five dimensions (see Figure 2.2). The three stages include awareness, interaction, and mastery. Within these three stages are five dimensions including, leadership information, leadership attitude, communication, decision-making, and stress management.

**Figure 2.2. Youth Leadership Curriculum Model**



Note. Youth Leadership Curriculum Model from “A Comprehensive Leadership Education Model to Train, Teach, and Develop Leadership in Youth” by J. Ricketts and R. Rudd, 2002. *Journal of Career and Technical Education*, 19(1). <https://doi.org/10.21061/jcte.v19i1.655>

As youth develop and differ in their personality type, experience, education, and learning they share commonalities that are similar amongst each other (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002). These commonalities include the development of leadership, the need to separate from their parents, the need for self-discovery, the way they learn and develop leadership skills, as well as the need to explore (VanLinden & Fertman, 1998). Adolescent development is important when considering youth leadership and a youth leadership design model. Everyone is different in their ability to lead, and the youth’s differences and similarities and needs should all be considered when using a model for formal youth leadership (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002).

The model developed by VanLinden and Fertman (1998) with the five stages and three dimensions incorporate cognitive, emotional, and behavioral aspects of youth. Within the model, each stage has a circular unit, and the dimensions are taught at separate stages. The stages align with Kolbs (1984) Experiential Learning Theory. Kolb (1984) indicated that learning and leadership combines experience, perception, cognition, and behavior. In the youth leadership



curriculum model, the stages represent how students can proceed through and learn about each dimension of leadership which includes the awareness, interaction, and the integration levels (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002). In these stages, awareness includes orientation or becoming aware of the curriculum when being taught leadership skills (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002). The Interaction stage involves an exploration of leadership, and the integration includes the practice, or the master of the skills used during leadership experiences and activities (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002). Within these three stages are five dimensions: Leadership knowledge and information, leadership attitude will and desire, decision making reasoning and critical thinking, oral and written communication, and interpersonal and intrapersonal relations.

### **Leadership Knowledge and Information**

This dimension of the youth leadership curriculum model indicates what youth need to know and learn before applying leadership concepts. The leadership knowledge and information dimensions help young people understand the knowledge behind the information being shared. Within a youth and adult partnership, if young people such as the junior board learn knowledge and skills needed to train and teach other youth at conferences, they will be better able to practice their leadership skills and lead (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002). Adults within the American Hereford Association should provide youth with the necessary information to lead sessions and projects during the National Junior Hereford Expo as well as other conferences. When not receiving leadership knowledge or information from the adult, young people may have a harder time leading, and the youth and adult partnership may not be as stable.

### **Leadership Attitude Will and Desire**

McClelland's (1987) Theory of Motivation, formed the basis of the leadership attitude will and desire dimension. In the theory, it demonstrates that achievement, affiliation, and power

are the three needs that motivate an individual to a certain attitude and behavior (McClelland, 1987). The way a person views their environment and interprets it is their attitude (Chapman & O'Neil, 1999). The dimension of the youth leadership curriculum model stresses the importance of motivation, self-realization, and health are components of attitude will and desire. When a young person is healthy, has a positive self-image, and has coping skills they are at their optimum to develop (Lerner & Lerner, 2013). Youth and adult partnerships and mentoring should allow the individuals to experience positive self-image and provide positive coping skills. Within the National Junior Hereford Organization, young people serving on the junior board have the leadership attitude will and desire to lead the organization. They are motivated and have a positive image of the National Junior Hereford Organization. If young people do not have the motivation or the desire to lead their leadership attitude negatively impacts the youth within the organization.

### **Decision- Making Reasoning and Critical Thinking**

Critical thinking skills, decision making, and reasoning is critical when designing a model to teach leadership skills (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002). Critical thinking skills are important as young people can reflect and analyze issues as well as develop solutions to issues (Ricketts & Rudd, 2002). A youth and adult partnerships within the American Hereford Association should allow young people to make decisions for themselves which fosters their critical thinking skills and allows them to develop into leaders. When a person possesses critical thinking skills it allows them to get better jobs and fit within the changing environment to improve their quality of life (Thomas, 1992).

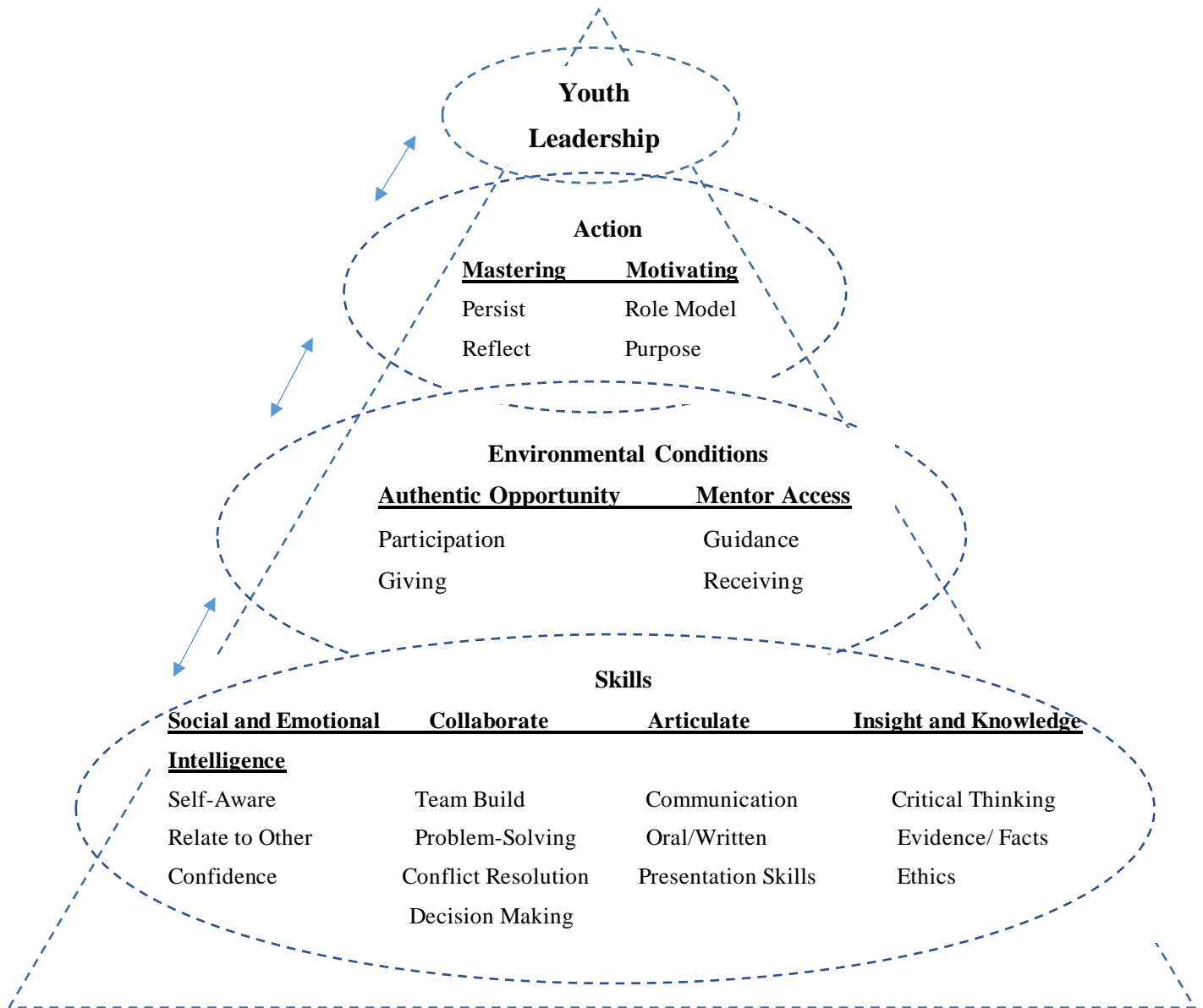
## **Intrapersonal and Interpersonal Relations**

The last dimension of the youth leadership development model is intrapersonal and interpersonal skills. Having the ability to address conflicts, handle stress, teamwork, as well as ethics combined with knowledge on leadership styles, personality types and communication skills fall under interpersonal and intrapersonal behaviors (Ricketts & Rudd 2002). Having personal skills allows young people to work with others to maximize benefits for both parties. Young people on the National Junior Hereford Board as well as adult leaders within the American Hereford Association should demonstrate interpersonal and intrapersonal skills by getting along with others, managing conflicts effectively and helping to maintain relationships with volunteers by communicating and understanding their needs.

## **Youth Leadership Development Conceptual Model**

Building on VanLinden and Fermans (1998) leadership curriculum model, Redmond and Dolan (2016) indicated that crucial factors were missing such as the opportunity to practice the leadership skills and explore the skills necessary for leadership. Their model brings components together that create youth leadership, incorporate skill development, environment conditions and actions. Within Redmond and Dolan (2016) conceptual model, a pyramid consists of three different areas, skills, environmental conditions, and actions (see Figure 2.3).

**Figure 2.3. Youth Leadership Development Model**



Note. Youth Leadership Development Curriculum Model. From “Towards a conceptual model of youth leadership development” by S. Redmond and P. Dolan, 2016, *Child & Family Social Work*, 21(3), 261–271. <https://doi.org/10.1111/cfs.12146>

## **Leadership Skills**

In the leadership skills area, skills such as social and emotional intelligence, collaboration, articulation and insight and knowledge are all needed for leadership.

*Social and emotional intelligence-* Goleman et al., (2002) indicated that a leader's emotional resonance is more effective leadership than a person's general intelligence. Leaders shall be self-aware through understanding their strengths and weaknesses, have self-regulation that leads to the inner drive to accomplish tasks, empathy, and social skills (Goleman, 2002). Several researchers have highlighted that self-awareness, self-management and relationship management are important parts of leadership (Boyatzis & Goleman, 2001; Redmond & Dolan, 2016; Roberts, 2009). To lead others, the young person needs to be aware of their own strengths and weaknesses and maximize other people's potential to lead. In addition, Kouzes and Posner (1995) believe that leaders need to have a relation to others in that they can relate which helps them see how others vision.

*Collaboration-* A second skill set within leadership as defined by Redmond & Dolan (2016) includes collaboration. Collaboration is the ability to work with everyone and recognize the time for all with their ideas, and their time (Kouzes & Posner, 1995). Collaborating as a team includes group dynamics but it is up to the role of the leader to help manage the dynamics and keep the team on track. The leader then is required to have conflict management skills, problem solving, decision making, and team building skills (Redmond & Dolan, 2016). When people are brought together in collaboration, stronger results can be produced which help teams work together toward a goal.

*Articulation-* Articulation includes being able to communicate with others and learn their opinion, yet also develop your own opinions and convincing arguments (Redmond & Dolan,

2016). Communication skills are important in a leadership position as the leader must articulate and be clear to others on their visions and goals. When a person does not communicate, they may not be effective in gaining support for their cause. Similarly, if a person does communicate but has no vision or road map they are not as effective as a leader (Redmond & Dolan, 2016). When young people are given the opportunity to practice communication skills it can help shape their development which in turn will allow them to gain confidence in themselves and overcome any challenges (Redmond & Dolan, 2016).

*Insight and Knowledge*-A leader has the knowledge or develops the knowledge about a particular subject in which they are leading (Redmond & Dolan, 2016). Mumford et al., (2000) stated that solving problems and thinking critically are all associated with having the knowledge which is essential in leadership. A leader must demonstrate good ethics as well. Ethics is important in a leadership position because one must know right from wrong and be a good judge of moral character (Northouse, 2004). When a person understands the knowledge in the organization for which they are leading, they can know what is ethical and what is fair in the organization. Leaders should model their actions on ethical principles which can create trust between the leaders and the followers (Redmond & Dolan, 2016)

## **Environmental Conditions**

There are two components of environmental conditions that Redmond & Dolan, 2016 believe are important in youth leadership: authentic opportunities and mentor access.

*Authentic Opportunities*-When young people are given the opportunity to participate, they are demonstrating decision-making skills. Youth participation can be described in Harts (1992) 'Ladder of Participation' which demonstrates the involvement of young people in the decision-making process. In the ladder, the top level is where young people make their own

decisions and lead (Hart, 1992). If adults choose to help the youth in their decision-making process this is one step down on the ladder (Hart, 1992). The lower levels of the ladder do not include youth in the decision-making process and rather view young people in a tokenism way. For young people to learn responsibility they need to be given the opportunity to learn leadership skills and lead (Redmond & Dolan, 2016). Young people should learn to take part and lead in areas that they are passionate about, as they then can enhance their passion into leadership opportunities (Redmond & Dolan, 2016).

*Mentor Access*-While a young person is leading, a mentor can help guide them to overcome any obstacles they may face. Within the individual's environment, the mentor inspires the youth to continue their own path. Camino and Zeldin (2002) indicated the importance of having a mentor or an adult that helps guide the youth. The mentor shall give the youth hands on learning through their shared experiences, and wisdom as well as their expertise on the subject at hand (Moir & Bloom, 2003). An important factor of mentoring is receiving in which young people learn to receive feedback and support from someone who has the shared prior knowledge, and experience (Uchino, 2009).

## **Action**

There are two areas to consider when discussing action in youth leadership. Action is the final component of the Youth Leadership Development Model.

*Motivating*- Leaders need to be motivated to achieve goals and have followers (Redmond & Dolan, 2016). Individuals need to be motivated to learn from experiences and enhance their skills for the future. Leadership requires commitment and passion towards a goal and the engagement of other followers. One critical component of leadership is inspiring others to believe in the same vision and goals (Shriberg et al., 2005). When individuals inspire, they are

motivating others and communicating with them in working towards a goal or passion. When leaders lead, they need to be motivated to listen to others' needs and understand those needs (Shriberg et al, 2005). A good leader is a good role model, and their actions also need to be worth following, together a person's behavior, time and energy determine how motivated they are in their leadership position (Redmond & Dolan, 2016).

*Mastering*- the last component of the Youth Leadership Development Conceptual Model is the ability to learn something and master the experience (Coyle, 2009). Coyle (2009) believes that deep practice and persistence allows a person to master what it is that they are proficient at. Determination and persistence provide a young person with the ability to master, which is an essential component of leadership. To overcome any challenges faced during a leadership position one must be determined (Redmond & Dolan, 2016; Roberts, 2009). Persistence and determination allow young people to push through any challenge, mastery is not giving up and pushing through the obstacles when in a leadership role. While a person pushes through their roles, they are also learning from experiences, by improving and mastering new skills (Kouze & Posner, 1995; Redmond & Dolan, 2016).

## **Theoretical Framework**

There are several theoretical frameworks that represent relationships between individuals. This research describes two main theoretical frameworks, and a relational based approach to leadership that help demonstrate the dynamics and the perceptions of the relationship between youth leaders and the adults within the American Hereford Association. The Relational Leadership Theory is described first, followed by the Leader Member Exchange Theory which is useful when demonstrating relational based approaches to leadership, and then Intergroup Contact Theory.



## **Relational Leadership Theory**

Relational leadership theory recognizes that leadership is not just confined to a single set of leaders or an individual (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Uhl-Bien (2005) and Lipman-Blumen, (1996) indicate that relations in traditional terms means that individuals get along with people and that the person thrives on relationships with others. Relational leadership theory is the study of the dynamics of relationships and the social interactions that occur within an organization or a group (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Relational leadership theory understands leadership as the process in which roles change and the structure of relationships that change within an organization (Dachler & Hosking, 1995). Relationships can form through a type of connection and a bond between individuals and people. When relationships and social ties are formed, they can be strong, weak, positive, and negative (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Once the relationship is formed it provides the context for which the behaviors occur and the relationship becomes dyadic which means that when the relationship is threatened, it may dissolve and reform again (Uhl-Bien, 2006).

There are two perspectives of leadership: one is entity, and the other is relational. In the entity perspective the focus is more on the individual, and it assumes that individuals have a knowing mind and that they have their own mind, and their minds and knowledge can be different from others (Dachler & Hosking, 1995). This view approaches relationships based on leadership in focusing on the individuals (leaders and followers) and their behaviors, intentions, perceptions and expectations within one another (Uhl-Bien et al., 2000). Dachler and Hosking (1995) indicated the entity approach as more of a subject-object approach to understanding relationships. Brower et al., (2000) and Graen and Uhl-Bien (1995) state the entity perspective is viewed as a two-way relationship between a leader and a follower and their work towards achieving mutual goals. The entity perspective views individuals as an 'agency' meaning that the

organization and its interaction is viewed as what results of individual action (Hoskins et al., 1995). The entity perspective views relationships in a traditional meaning such that relationships are a connection that exist between two people that have dealings with each other (Uhl-Bien, 2006) and that individuals bring certain characteristics to the relationship.

As opposed to entity, the relationship perspective views knowledge as socially constructed (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Within the relational perspective of leadership development, individuals recognize that the phenomenon exists interdependently (Uhl-Bien, 2006). In this process, knowing and knowledge are relating and constructing and making meaning of the phenomenon and creating understandings of why it exists (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Daschler and Hosking (1995) found that with a relational perspective, the relational process does not focus on the individual, but rather the social construction of the leadership that occurs (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Both entity and relational perspectives indicate that leadership is a social process, but how they view the process is different. The entity perspective understands the social process as individually constructed as they engage in partnerships with one another, and the relational perspective sees the people and the organization and process that is made in and not the makers of process (Uhl-Bien, 2006).

For purposes of this research, an entity perspective will be useful as it relates to youth and adult interactions. In the entity perspective, individuals have their own minds, and their knowing minds and opinions belong to them (Uhl-Bien, 2006). As individuals interact with each other in forming youth and adult partnerships, the partnership can be viewed as positive or negative depending on the individual and their actions. The entity perspective approaches relationships as individual orientated rather than as a group and focuses more on the perceptions intentions and behaviors of individuals in respect to their relationships with one another (Dachler

& Hosking, 1995). In youth and adult partnerships, the relationship between youth and adults are focused more on the individuals themselves and how they perceive each other and their intentions and interactions. When positive interactions and perceptions are perceived within the youth and adult partnership, their evaluation, expectation and understanding of the relationship is also positive.

There are five components of Relational Leadership theory that are useful when discussing the relationships between people that come together for a common purpose or attaining goals. As Brower et al., (2000) points out, these relationships are a two-way influence between the leader and the follower to attain mutual goals. The components include, inclusive, empowerment, purposeful, ethical, and process orientated (Schuyler, 2022).

*Inclusive-* Individuals who are leaders should seek out the opinions of others and be aware of their own biases. Schuyler (2022) implied that inclusive means that leaders understand others and believe that others can make a difference as well. In addition, being inclusive in the organization means that leaders are not only aware of themselves, but they listen to others and all points of view while helping to restore the relationship with individuals in their organization (Schuyler, 2022).

*Empowerment-* When individuals share power, they can help inspire and share responsibilities toward future leaders and generations within the organization. Schuyler (2022) believed that empowerment brings the organization into having a more positive impact, positive self-esteem for all, and encouragement to others. In addition, empowerment from a leader can promote leadership at all levels of the organization.

*Purposeful-* When an individual is a purposeful leader, they make decisions that enable people to follow their lead. Individuals in leadership positions should consider the decisions they

make and have good purposeful relationships with the people they are leading. To be purposeful in the organization, a leader should be transparent, promote positive attitudes, and be supportive in an environment that promotes creativity and innovation and involves others in the vision (Schuyler, 2022).

*Ethical-* A leader that demonstrates appropriate conduct demonstrates ethical behaviors. It is important that as a leader, one demonstrates appropriate conduct (Schuyler, 2022). Leaders should lead by example and have positive behaviors within the workplace. Ethical practices mean that a leader is thorough in their decision making, they have a high standard of behavior for everyone and that everyone participates in addition to helping everyone (Schuyler, 2022). Ethical practices also include focusing on the development of a person through actions that benefit them rather than yourself (Schuyler, 2022).

*Process orientated-* When a leader is process orientated, they have the ability to recognize characteristics that help the team overcome challenges and accomplish the team or organization's purpose (Schuyler, 2022). Leaders need to be held accountable for empowering others and motivating them to meet their end goals. When a leader is process orientated, they understand the community and organization, they collaborate and reflect on the process, in addition they give and receive feedback (Schuyler, 2022). A process orientated leader understands that the process to get to the goals is just as important as the outcome (Schuyler, 2022).

### **Leader Member Exchange**

The Leader Member Exchange (LMX) theory is useful when referencing relational based approaches to leadership (Graen & Uhl-Bien, 1995). The Leader-Member Exchange Theory demonstrates that leadership occurs when effective relationships occur between leaders and

followers and the relationships bring many benefits to the partnerships (Uhl-Bien et al., 2000; Liden et al., 1997). This theory describes that through interactions with leaders, members, teammates, and peers it generates leadership among those and demonstrates the leadership benefit for the organization (Gerstner & Day, 1997). While looking at LMX, it demonstrates an entity perspective because of the individual interactions and behaviors one exhibits as they engage in relationships with one another (Dachler & Hosking, 1995). Uhl-Bien et al., (2000) stated the relationship process is where two individuals interact and exchange many interactions, further concluding that the interactions depend on many factors such as what type of characteristics the individual brings to the partnerships, this includes personal and physical characteristics, in addition it also depends on the individuals' expectations of how the relationship should go and their reaction to the exchange.

For effective youth and adult partnerships, positive interactions must occur which then allows for effective leadership to occur between the leaders and the followers which would be the exchange of leadership between the youth and the adult in the organization. In addition, when individuals are viewed as equal in the partnership, adults provide youth a voice and give them leadership powers such as decision making. When youth are given decision making powers it helps them develop into leaders and practice leadership skills. Furthermore, as Uhl-Bien et al. (2000) indicated, the relationship is also based on several factors, one of these is the characteristics of what individuals bring to the relationship. If youth and adult partnerships are not positive, meaning that negative characteristics are displayed, there is no benefit to the organization and the partnership. When individuals have positive interactions for each other and positive characteristics shown, it allows the individuals to fully develop into leaders and positive

youth development can occur (Uhl-Bien et al., 2000). Relations with peers and teammates are important in the development of young people to acquire leadership skills.

Leader Member Exchange Theory is useful for youth and adult partnerships because there is an equal learning and youth can have just as equal voice as the adults which helps the partnership be successful (Uhl-Bien, 2000). Within relationships, youth will also feel like they can take ownership together with the adults on projects that are within the community (Uhl-Bien, 2000). Effective relationships are needed so that youth can demonstrate leadership and the relationships between youth and adults remain positive. With effective and strong relationships between youth and adults it can bring many benefits to the partnership and the community (Uhl-Bien et al., 2000).

### **Intergroup Contact Theory**

Allport's (1954) Intergroup Contact Theory is based on research around the Civil Rights Movement. In his theory he composes critical situational conditions that must exist to reduce prejudice among group members. In the context of this study, prejudice refers to stereotypes such as age, gender, perceptions, biases, and attitudes towards an individual. Allport (1954) argues that by bringing different groups together in interactive settings that prejudices, and biases will be reduced specifically among those within the ingroup (those that possess power, privilege, and status). Those within the ingroup will also have positive attitudes about the outgroup members (those that are less connected and seen as undesirable). However, to achieve the success of intergroup relations, he proposes that there must be at least four conditions that need to be met, this includes 1) equal status within the situation, 2) common goals, 3) intergroup cooperation, 4) support of authorities or custom, and laws.

*Equal Status within the situation*- It is important that within a situation or interaction that both groups expect and perceive equal status in the situation (Cohen & Lotan, 1995 & Pettigrew, 1998). Some researchers believe that going into the situation with an equal status will help reduce biases (Brewer & Kramer, 1985). Brewer and Miller (1984) indicated that when individuals have equal status it will allow for less separation and promote equality among the members. In addition, Gaertner and Dovidio (2000) found that attitudes were more positive when individuals were in groups where they had different tasks. However, other researchers such as Brewer & Miller (1984) indicated that having equal status can be a threat to the status of power. In the context of equal status, Hewstone's (1996) Mutual Intergroup Differentiation Model indicated that when there is equal status among group members, it reduces intergroup biases and improves the attitudes specifically when group members have expertise in different areas because they feel valued and recognized by the other group members. Within youth and adult partnerships, youth and adults should go into the interaction with equal status as it will help to reduce bias and perhaps create more positive attitudes towards each other. The more interaction individuals have with one another, equal status can be achieved, and a reduction of bias will occur (Jones, 2004; Pettigrew 1998).

*Common Goals*- Prejudices such as negative behaviors, attitudes, feelings towards one another and actions, can be further reduced when individuals work together to achieve a common goal (Pettigrew, 1998). When individuals have common goals and work together to achieve these goals, ingroup members such as adult leaders benefit from seeing the potential of the outgroup member (ex: youth) (Jones, 2004; Pettigrew 1998). The ingroup (adult) learns to change their perceptions when they see the potential of the outgroup or the youth when having a common goal (Pettigrew, 1998). The outgroup (youth) has the ability to share and exchange information

with the ingroup (adult), this exchange allows the adult to see the potential of the outgroup, which then allows them to have more decision-making power (Jones, 2004; Pettigrew, 1998). Within youth and adult interactions, the adults learn from the youth specifically when they have common goals in mind. The adults then benefit from seeing the potential that the youth can bring to the interaction and thus reducing their bias and prejudices towards them and allowing them more decision-making power (Jones, 2004).

*Intergroup cooperation-* Research suggested that positive interaction between groups will result in attitudinal and behavioral changes (Brewer & Miller, 1984). When positive cooperation occurs between the group members, many group members continue to focus on the good and the knowledge that the other group members have (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Stephan & Stephan, 1984). However, Brewer and Miller (1984) have also noted that when group members or individuals do not meet a goal or a task, it can create bitterness among the group. Youth and adult interaction within the American Hereford Association should be positive and cooperation should exist among the two groups, youth and adult. When positive interactions and cooperation occur, there is room for both parties to see changes in attitudes and behavior about each other. When intergroup cooperation exists among youth and adults' positive youth development can occur (Jones 2004).

*Support of Authorities/Laws or Customs-* The last condition of intergroup contact theory that must exist includes the support of authorities, laws, and customs. Several theorists of intergroup contact theory identified that shared values, customs, norms and support of authority that is brought during meeting or interaction can reduce biases and stereotypes of the individuals and group members (Brewer & Miller, 1984; Pettigrew, 1998). When the norm of the group for example favors equality and positive interactions, there is loyalty to such values. Rather than



youth being thought of as negative and a hinder to the community for example, youth would be thought of as members of the group that reflect the same commonalities as that of the adult (Jones, 2004). In youth and adult interactions, shared values, and beliefs about what positive youth development is can influence how they view positive youth development. If young people are viewed in more of a positive way, such as that of the framework of positive youth development, more people will value and have respect for youth (Jones 2004; Pettigrew 1998).

Pettigrew (1998) posits there is much debate as to how much contact is required to reduce prejudice and biases towards one another and have more positive attitudes (Pettigrew, 1998). Cook (1984) indicated that those researchers who have used Intergroup Contact Theory in their research studies, the individuals in the studies have previously been in contact with one another. Differences in the experiences of individuals in contact with one another are not all related to the intergroup contact experience. Expanding on Allport's (1954) hypothesis, Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) indicated that intergroup contact does have positive experiences even when some of the conditions indicated by Allport (1954) are not met. In 2004, Lee et al., conducted research through a national survey that indicated the public's opinions of an outgroup, the homeless. This study found that any type of exposure such as observations, face-to face interactions, and information from a third party, were all found to be positive and the public formed positive attitudes of the homeless (Lee et al., 2004). With the idea in mind that not all four conditions need to be met, Pettigrew (1998) and Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) indicate that Allports (1954) conditions may improve the outcomes of a contact situation, but they are not all necessary in all contexts. Allport (1954), Pettigrew (1998) and Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) posit that group dynamics are complex and there are many factors that need to be considered to understand the bonds that groups form with each other and to shift towards positive outlooks on the outgroup.

Although group dynamics are complex and hard to understand, Pettigrew (1998), Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) stated that to promote attitude change and behaviors, individuals and group members must learn about each other specifically in the outgroups. In addition, when group members interact on a regular basis, they also reduce anxiety and prejudices against one another while changing their attitudes about each other (Pettigrew, 1998). As with any experience, intergroup contact can also have undesirable effects if the interaction between individuals and groups is not as positive. Pettigrew and Tropp (2006) also indicated that groups should embrace new perspectives and attitudes that are outside of the group's social network, thus indicating an ingroup reappraisal.

Intergroup Contact Theory can be useful when discussing youth and adult interactions and the development of youth because this theory proposes the ideas that groups that interact and cooperate with each other can create equal voice, and mutual learning while coming together for a common purpose or a goal (Allport, 1954; Jones, 2004). Very similar in a youth development setting, where youth and adults come together to share a common purpose or a goal for a given project or program. When groups interact and create mutual learning, cooperation, and have an equal status within a group, positive youth development can occur (Jones, 2004). Within a youth and adult partnership, there needs to be the sharing of power among both youth and adults, this reflects the condition of shared equal status that Allport (1954) indicated for intergroup contact to occur. In Intergroup Contact Theory, Allport (1954) suggested one condition is cooperation and importance of sharing common goals. When youth and adults come together for a project within the community, they have high levels of effort when they take ownership of the project and feel as if their ideas matter (Mitra, 2003). Within the literature of positive youth development, youth are viewed not as tokens rather having positive attributes that one can learn

from (Eccles & Gootman, 2002). This supports Allport's (1954) Intergroup Contact Theory key condition of having members that support authorities' laws and customs. Intergroup Contact Theory has criteria that are like the benefits of youth and adult partnerships and positive youth development but also address the issues that prevent the success of a positive youth and adult partnership within a community (Jones, 2004).

In the AHA, both youth and adults come together for a certain purpose and goal which creates a relationship. This relationship should be positive, and adults should recognize the youth's strengths and not feel as if they are superior compared to the youth. If the relationship is not positive, youth and adults do not have clear goals, mutual respect, cooperation, or equal status with the interaction, it hinders positive youth development from occurring in the partnership. If individuals in the AHA indicate positive relationships they more than likely will have cooperation, mutual learning, and feel as if there is an equal status among the group. In addition, the more junior board members, ambassadors, and adults interact, biases and anxiety can be reduced between them allowing positive youth development to happen.

One of the components of the Relational Leadership Theory includes empowerment, this means that leaders or adults share their power, and inspire responsibilities in others, or in youth. When adults empower youth, the organization, the AHA, can have a positive impact (Lerner et al., 2011b). The adults within the AHA should empower and inspire youth in the organization to become their best and promote a positive self-image. This research study will determine the perceptions of the interactions between youth and adults, which will better indicate the dynamics of the relationship and determine if positive youth development is occurring within the partnership and organization.

## **Conclusion**

Positive youth development is a vision for promoting healthy development in young people. Positive youth development recognizes young people as having the strength and potential to make a difference in society (Lerner et al., 2005b). Positive youth development was framed around how young people develop, grow, and learn and includes five C's which aid in the development of the young people. The five C's of positive youth development include competence, confidence, connection, caring, character, and a sixth C that was added later includes contribution (Lerner & Lerner, 2013). In addition to the 5 C's of positive youth development, the Developmental Relationships Framework is used to identify what young people need in relationships to develop positively (Search Institute, 2020). Youth and adult partnerships were developed to better understand the relationship process between youth and adults when working on programs (Lofquist, 1989). It is important that both youth and adults act as partners when contributing to a program, project, or task, this includes mutual learning by both parties (National Commission on Resources for Youth, 1974). These youth and adult partnerships are an important aspect of the youth's psychological development and well-being. Youth and adult partnerships can be displayed on a continuum that was developed by Jones and Perkins (2004), this continuum allows the relationship to be categorized depending on the involvement of the youth and or the adult ranging from adult centered leadership to youth center leadership. It is important that youth and adults have an equal opportunity to share, thus being categorized in the middle or the youth and adult partnership category.

Perceptions that youth have of adults while working together on projects within an organization has been studied by numerous researchers (Bading et al., 2012, Bowers et al., 2016; Jones 2014; Price and Been, 2018a; Price & Been 2018b) and conclude that the more

involvement and interaction that youth have with the adults the more positive they feel about their relationship. In addition, the same holds true for adults' perception of youth, many of these same studies (Bading et al., 2012; Bowers et al., 2016; Jones 2014; Price and Been, 2018b) indicated that more time spent with youth, decreases the adults' perceptions of negative stereotypes. It is critical to note that youth and adult partnerships have an impact on the youth's ability to lead and gain leadership skills for their future.

Leadership is defined as an approach to facilitate change and is often used with management and authority (Redmond & Dolan, 2016). While in youth and adult partnerships, youth have the potential to be influenced by leaders and learn the methods of leadership. Adult leadership is described as what adults currently do to teach young people about leadership (MacNeil, 2006). Several educators, mentors, and program leaders serve in the capacity of a adult leadership role. The youth Leadership Curriculum Development Model can be useful when teaching leadership skills to young people. Not only the Curriculum Development Model but also the Youth Leadership Development Conceptual Model focuses on individuals' ability to practice leadership and what is needed to practice leadership in an external environment, this included environment conditions, leadership skills, and actions. The Leadership Curriculum Development Model and the Youth Leadership Development models are important when teaching leadership and discussing leadership with young people.

## **Chapter 3 - Methodology**

The purpose of this research was to examine the perceptions of youth and adult partnerships, understand knowledge of youth development by both youth and adults as well as describe experiences of junior board members, ambassadors, and the expectations that adults have of youth in a leadership role. This study addressed the following research objectives.

1. Describe the perceptions of youth and adult interactions by those in youth leadership positions and the adult leaders in a trade industry.
2. Describe the experiences of youth and adult leaders in a leadership role within a trade industry.
3. Determine youth and adult leaders' expectations of each other when in leadership positions.
4. Determine the knowledge of positive youth development of junior board members, ambassadors, and adult leaders in a trade industry.

### **Population**

The target population for this research study consisted of previous and current junior board members, previous ambassadors, volunteers, and staff within the American Hereford Association. The American Hereford Association (AHA) includes over 7,500 active adult and junior members. The American Hereford Association is a non-profit organization, located in Kansas City, MO, and includes subsidiaries such as, Certified Hereford Beef (CHB) LLC, Hereford Publications Inc (HPI), and the American Beef Records Association (ABRA) (American Hereford Association, 2022). The AHA provides services for their members while they promote the Hereford breed. In addition, the AHA provides education opportunities and supports youth leadership, development, and research. Within the AHA is the National Junior

Hereford Association (NJHA). The National Junior Hereford Association is one of the largest, strongest, and most active junior cattle programs in the country with over 3,000 active junior members. Junior members that are a part of the association have earned several top awards and have earned respect as top youth in organizational success (American Hereford Association, 2022). Several educational programs are provided for the future beef industry leaders through extensive programs like the National Junior Hereford Expo, Face of Leadership Conference, and the Fed Steer Shootout. These traditions plus the 12-member junior youth board have allowed the AHA to thrive and have created an approach to further develop a meaningful interaction and educational focus (American Hereford Association, 2022).

The NJHA partners with the Hereford Youth Foundation of America, which provides leadership and educational opportunities for junior members across the country. The opportunities encourage and recognize, as well as reward the development of life skills and values for the next generation of leaders. While being active members for the NJHA, young people are provided with opportunities to learn, lead, and achieve so that they can have a brighter future in the cattle industry.

Consisting of one of the largest cattle breed organizations in the country, the American Hereford Association was chosen for this research because of their desire to promote research, education, and leadership within their young people. Conveniently located in Kansas City, MO the American Hereford Association was also selected because of their location and ease of access for researchers. The population of this study involved junior board members that retired in 2019, 2020, 2021, 2022, and 2023 (n= 36). The NJHA Junior Board includes 12 young people that serve a three-year term and help govern the 3,800-member junior organization. There are four new members that are elected each year at the National Junior Hereford Expo. The junior board

members that served in 2019-2023 have a rich understanding of youth and adult partnerships as they have served in their leadership role for the full three years. The junior board members that will retire in the summer of 2023 are considered current junior board members. Additionally, some of the young juniors that are retired from their leadership role may serve in a volunteer or staff capacity for the AHA and fully understand how youth and adults interact within the AHA.

Ambassadors are also a huge part of the success of the National Junior Hereford Expo. The ambassadors assist the National Junior Hereford Association in a three weeklong internship as they prepare for the National Junior Hereford Expo. The ambassadors work with both adults and volunteers of the association to help put on one of the largest events for the organization. The ambassadors that served in 2019, 2020, 2021 and 2022 are a part of the population of this study ( $n=15$ ). The 2019-2022 ambassadors will understand the relationship they had with the junior board. Additionally, with only a few (three to five), ambassadors serving each year, this study wanted a rich understanding of the perceptions that the ambassadors felt during their role so therefore ambassadors selected were ambassadors from the past four years.

The target population of this study also consisted of adult volunteers that were selected by the AHA to participate ( $n = 15$ ), these volunteers have devoted several hours to working with the young people and other adult volunteers with the AHA. The volunteers included those that are a part of the American Hereford Women, State Advisors, and volunteers during the National Junior Hereford Expo, and those that had or currently have adult leadership positions within the American Hereford Association serving on the Senior Board of Directors. With their time and commitment to the NJHA and the AHA they have a strong perspective on the interactions between youth and adults.



Lastly, staff within the AHA are also a part of the population of this study (n = 14). The AHA staff that work with junior board members and ambassadors understand the working relationship between both junior board members and ambassadors as well as adults. The staff are the ones that can help create strong relationships and partnerships between volunteers, junior board, and ambassadors. Staff within the American Hereford Association also understand the importance of the role that adults play in the lives of young people. The staff within this population included only those staff that work with the junior board members, and ambassadors which included staff from the administrative team, communications department, youth activities and foundation, field staff and the commercial program. With previous and current junior board members (n=36), previous ambassadors (n=15), volunteers (n=15) and AHA staff (n=14) the population for this study was (N=80).

Of the 80 individuals, 67 chose to respond to the survey. Of the 67 responses, 59 of the responses were useable for the study leaving a response rate of 73%. Of the 59 individuals that participated in the survey, 11 (18.6%) were previous ambassadors, 11 (18.6%) were current junior board members, 18 (30.5%) were previous junior board members, 10 (16.9%) were adult volunteers within the AHA, and 9 (15.3%) were adult staff members in the AHA. Of the respondents 36 (61%) were female and 23 (39%) were male. All eighty individuals were invited to participate in a semi structured interview through zoom, a total of 12 interviews were conducted, five previous or current junior board members, three previous ambassadors, and four adults.

## **Research Design**

The design of this study is a mixed methods study, specifically an explanatory sequential design (Toyon, 2021). Mixed methods approach to research combines both qualitative and

quantitative data collection into one study (Molina-Azorin, 2012). The use of mixed methods has been around for several years, Greene et al., (1989) define mixed methods as research designs that involve at least one quantitative and one qualitative method. Tashakkori and Teddlie (1998) refer to mixed methods as studies that combine a mixed approach of both qualitative and quantitative research in one single study. The use of both qualitative and quantitative methods in one single study may provide a rich understanding of the research problem rather than just one method (Cresewell & Tashakkori, 2007). Mixed methods research answers research questions that other methodologies cannot (Molina-Azorin, 2012). Within a mixed method research, quantitative research tests theory and qualitative research is more concerned with the theory building (Punch, 2005). Mixed methods allow the researcher to generate and verify theory at the same time and make stronger conclusions (Molina-Azorin, 2012). There are several potential benefits of a mixed methods study, this includes stronger and increased confidence in the results, and more insights to the phenomenon that is happening (Molina- Azorin, 2012). When a researcher utilizes mixed methods, they seek convergence and corroboration of the findings from different methods that examine the same phenomenon. The use of multiple methods is called triangulation or can use the results from one method to inform the findings of the other method, this is referred to as development. Additionally, mixed methods approaches can be complementary in which researchers clarify the results from one method to the other (Ary et al, 2010; Molina-Azorin, 2012). This research uses a complimentary design method as the quantitative survey will be used to inform as well as be used to complement the interviews that will take place after the completion of the quantitative survey. In a mixed method approach quantitative and qualitative methods can be approached equally to understand the phenomenon and the information can be introduced in sequence or phases (Ary et al., 2010).

The *Involvement and Interaction Rating scale* was used to collect quantitative data and administered to previous and current junior board members, ambassadors, volunteers, and staff within the American Hereford Association. The quantitative phase was important as it explored the perceptions of participants with each other and their influences, either positive or negative. According to Jones (2004) there have been few if any studies that investigate the perceptions of youth and adults in making a change within a community. Through the analysis of the perceptions of interactions of both youth and adults within the community of the American Hereford Association, this research study has the potential to make contributions to the field of youth development beyond 4-H and FFA programs. Once the quantitative data was collected and analyzed participants were invited to participate in an interview process, or the second phase of data collection. The results from the interview will draw on inferences made from the quantitative phase of the research. In addition, the qualitative phase allows researchers to better understand the experiences of the participants while they tell their story, which offered more clarity to the findings of the quantitative phase (Ary et al., 2010).

This study describes an explanatory sequential design, in that qualitative methods are used to help strengthen and provide a deep explanation of the quantitative findings (Anderson, 2016). The explanatory sequential design is the most common form of a mixed methods study and focuses on the quantitative phase and then the qualitative phase (Toyon, 2021). The qualitative phase is used to better understand and explain the quantitative phase, and sometimes can explain why there are outliers in the data. This explanatory design uses the second phase or the qualitative phase to ‘explain’ why something is occurring (Toyon, 2021). The interview process was used to help explain individual perceptions of relationships with youth and adults.

Toyon (2021) suggests that the quantitative data is analyzed using descriptive measures to describe the population and determine the results. The survey results were analyzed using descriptive data and allowed the researchers to provide characteristics on the target population and their responses. This descriptive feedback allowed researchers to obtain high-quality in-depth interviews with participants. According to Toyon (2021) in-depth interviews form a connection between the interviewer and the interviewee. To form a connection with the interviewee, the interview process requires planning and the creation of a relationship with the interviewees (Toyon, 2021). The interviewee must trust the interviewer so that they are able to give a response and the required information that is needed. The interview process was planned and offered respondents the opportunity to express their thoughts and feelings as researchers informed them that the interview was confidential, and that all personal information would be removed and be kept anonymous to protect the participant and build trust. If the interviewee can trust the researcher, it allows them to respond more in depth and provide good information that is needed (Toyon, 2021). To help establish trust, the interviewer should be fully prepared, knowledgeable, and presented well (Toyon, 2021). Once collected, the qualitative data was analyzed using codes and themes. A description can be found in the data analysis section.

Using a mixed methods approach can enhance the validity of the inferences made to provide mutual confirmations of the findings (Jason & Glenwisk, 2016). In addition, using a mixed method approach can strengthen the research as it fosters a team-based approach in which researchers can bring their own strengths and weaknesses to the research (Bartholomew & Brown, 2012). The mixed methods approach, explanatory sequential design, allowed me to accomplish my research purpose as it answered my research questions. Participants were asked about their perceptions of youth and adult partnerships in the survey as well as their interactions

but other research questions such as describe the experiences of youth leaders serving in a youth leadership role needed to be answered using a qualitative perspective. As the quantitative phase was first it allowed me to discover the perceptions that youth and adults have in their interactions with each other. The results of the quantitative phase guided questions that were asked in the qualitative phase such as describe your experiences and tell me about a time in which your voice was not heard within the AHA.

### **Researcher Subjectivity**

While conducting and analyzing this research, I made sure to address my own subjectivity. As a previous employee in the cooperative extension program in a Midwest Land Grant University, a volunteer in the 4-H program, as well as the livestock industry, I routinely engaged with youth, families, and volunteers. Through my involvement with 4-H and serving as a volunteer in the livestock industry, I am an insider to this organization and my statement is coming from my perspective on how important youth and adult interactions are for both youth and adults. I believe that youth and adults should interact and work collaboratively together and communicate in a positive manner. As I routinely engage with young people in the livestock industry and in the 4-H program, my research stance is positive towards positive youth development.

Throughout my time as a volunteer and as an employee of a land grant institution cooperative extension program, I have witnessed several positive youth and adult partnerships in which young people have developed positively because of the support of the adult. Also, I have witnessed a non-supportive relationship between a youth and an adult in which the youth suffer in development and do not have the ability to utilize their strengths. My career in extension education is dedicated to helping provide strong positive youth development opportunities for

young people. I believe that in having strong partnerships and interactions between youth and adults it will provide young people with the skills they need to develop positively. If young people do not have a positive experience working with adults and if adults do not have the positive experience working with youth, then the relationships suffer, and they are not able to learn from each other. I also believe that positive experiences provide positive results for young people and strengthen their development.

Reflexivity was a component of the interview process as I addressed my own subjectivity through taking notes and memo writing during the interviews. I went into the interview with an open mind in that not all organizations are like the 4-H organization and or work the same way. Through my experiences I can help with various youth leadership and partnerships and guide them on interactions if needed. However, during these interviews I was enlightened to hear that the American Hereford Association does provide youth with opportunities to develop and enhance their skills to become better young people. In addition, adults also determined that young people like junior board members, lead in a positive way and are a positive voice of the junior association with their guidance. Adults are important in youth's life as they become the one that models the positive behaviors for the junior board members. This is congruent with my beliefs that in youth organizations strong youth and adult partnerships provide youth with the ability to strengthen their skills while in leadership positions yet also be encouraged by adult role models.

### **Rigor, Trustworthiness and Validity**

Ary et al., (2010); and Teddlie and Tashakkori (2006) posit that rigor in mixed methods can be examined in two ways this includes the design quality and examining the interpretive rigor. Design quality refers to the ways in which the design of the research meets the purpose of

the study. Researchers should ask themselves questions such as is the design of this study consistent with the research questions. Researchers should also ask themselves are the procedures implemented properly and is data used appropriately (Ary et al., 2010). Interpretive rigor refers to the distinction between the two approaches and the consistency with various known theories within the field. Additionally, can the conclusions and inferences be drawn with both forms of research design quantitative and qualitative. Rigor in mixed methods argues that both quantitative and qualitative should be of quality (Teddlie & Tashakkori, 2016).

In addition, Creswell and Tashakorri (2007) and Reio and Wener (2017) demonstrated design qualities that a mixed methods should encompass. They stated that in a mixed method research, the research needs to be well developed as both quantitative and qualitative should be treated equally and that they should not be used to offset each other (Reio & Werner, 2017). In this research both quantitative and qualitative data was reported separately which enhanced the findings from each method and the two types of methods were not used to offset each other and instead were used as complements of each other (Cresswell & Tashakorri, 2007). Mixed methods research should also be separate in their research questions and hypotheses (Cresswell & Tashakorri, 2007; Reio & Werner, 2017). In this study, specific research questions were answered using quantitative methods and others were used using qualitative methods. The research questions that answered perceptions were answered using a quantitative method, and the research questions that were asking personal experiences and thoughts were used using a qualitative method.

Creswell and Tashakorri (2007) believe that in mixed methods research, both external and internal validity should be reported as well as determining how member checks were handled. In this study, there can be several threats to both internal and external validity. Internal

validity is the inferences that are made in which the changes in the dependent variable did cause the change in the independent variable (Ary et al., 2010). External validity refers to the generalizability of the study and if the results can be generalized beyond the setting (Ary et al., 2010). Internal validity in this research includes subject effect, diffusion, and possibly experimenter effect (Ary et al., 2010). Subject effect occurs when individuals have attitudes that they develop based on the study that is happening. Participants can change their behaviors because they know that they are participating in a study and change their beliefs and attitudes about the subject (Ary et al., 2010). This is referred to as the Hawthorne effect, in which participants change their behaviors. While in communication with participants researchers stressed that confidentiality would be ensured so that they could express their true thoughts and feelings toward the subject. With all personal and contact information removed, it provided a way for conclusions to be drawn anonymously about the subject. Subject effect is also a threat to external validity.

Diffusion is another threat to internal validity; diffusion happens when participants communicate about the information in the study to each other. Diffusion can occur within an organization because they may discuss how they want the organization to be perceived. In this study, the participants in the American Hereford Association may communicate about the survey or about the interviews that take place. To help control communication within the organization, researchers can emphasize that an experiment is going on which helps to reduce diffusion issues (Ary et al., 2010).

Experimenter effect can also occur within this research, experimenter effect is the researchers unintentional bias of the researcher (Ary et al., 2010). As a researcher I was invited to participate in the National Junior Hereford Expo as an Ambassador in the summer of 2022. I



witnessed firsthand what youth and adult partnerships were like and have my own opinions and thoughts on how I was treated yet also how others were treated, and my thoughts were captured in a journal each day. Throughout the interview process, non-verbal cues may change or alter what the respondent was going to say. To handle the experimenter effect, I will standardize all procedures and control my own reflections and thoughts and go into the interview with an open mind (Ary et al., 2010). Experimenter effect is both an internal and external threat to validity.

For the quantitative portion of this research, the Involvement and Interaction Rating Scale designed by Jones (2004) was utilized. With the use of a previously developed instrument, rigor was established which consisted of Cronbach's alpha ranging from .79-.93 in several studies (Bading et al, 2016; Jones 2004). Utilizing the instrument in a pilot study prior to the main research, the Cronbach's alpha ranged from .66-.93.

In addition, rigor was established in the qualitative phase as member checks allowed for participant feedback and helped add validity to the research. When the analysis of the interviews was complete, I asked participants to review the analysis and check for accuracy which provided insights and more attention to patterns I may have missed (Ary et al., 2010). Furthermore, confirmability of the study was addressed in the researcher's reflexivity, and the use of notes, memos and an audit trail of collection and analysis process. With each step of the analysis process, data was sent to the major professor or committee member for peer review which provides credibility to the study (Ary et al., 2010). Additionally, I addressed my own research bias in the subjectivity statement.

### **Epistemological and Theoretical Framework**

The epistemological stance that my research is grounded in is constructionism. Crotty (1998) defined the constructionist viewpoint as "meaning is not discovered but constructed" (p.

42). The purpose of this research was to describe the perceptions of interactions between youth and adults within a trade industry organization. In addition to better understand how individuals ‘constructed’ their experiences while serving in leadership roles for the American Hereford Association. Constructionism is the belief that all reality is dependent upon human interactions that are constructed within their environments in a social context (Crotty, 1998). The goal of this research was not to discover the truth that is involved but how the individuals make meaning from their interactions with the real world and those around them. The constructionist view is not subjective or objective, rather it is both (Crotty, 1998). Constructionism is the view that as humans interact the world is created by their interactions and their social world becomes constructed through their interactions (Crotty, 1998). The interactions are also based upon an individual’s own thoughts and how they make meaning to the connections, therefore our views are socially constructed. However, these interactions do not necessarily need to be with humans as the interactions can be with the setting in which we are in such as observations. While interviewing young people as well as adults, their experiences serving as leaders can be constructed because of not only the interactions with humans but also the interactions in their environments. Therefore, through a constructionist viewpoint each meaning that is constructed is based on ‘experiences’ that the individuals have.

The research philosophy that is rooted in constructionism is pragmatism. Pragmatism views knowledge as adaptable because it has so many viewpoints and views of reality. Pragmatism views these realities as ever changing and those views are also dependent on one’s actions (Toyon, 2021). Pragmatists believe the world has several views because of those that interpret it, they also know there are some social structures that are already established. Pragmatism informed this research because of exploring the expectations that adults have for

their young people and how they prepare them to be leaders within the trade industry organization based on the social structures that are appropriate for their organization.

Within constructionism, the theoretical perspective of which I hold my views is the interpretivism approach. Interpretivism believes that the world is socially constructed and created (Crotty, 1998). The world in which we live is about individual perceptions and their realities of how they view the world. These views are because of their interactions within their environment. Interpretivism and constructionism are similar in their realities and perspectives. Within this research, my purpose was to understand perceptions and experiences based on beliefs that were constructed from individual actions and realities from their environment. Within this research, in understanding perceptions and experiences it would allow me to understand the causes and the effects of why these experiences might have happened and the connections between the interactions and positive youth development. These connections between what individuals were experiencing and positive youth development allowed me to create solutions for the trade industry to work with young people.

Looking through the lens of interpretivism my belief lies in that of symbolic interactionism. Symbolic interactionism closely follows pragmatic views. This idea is understanding human lived experiences and how humans form social behaviors through their meanings (Prus, 2003). There are several core principles of symbolic interactionism that include meaning, language and thought. Humans interact in language which negotiates meaning to the interaction and are social which reflects on their process based on both verbal and non-verbal communication (Carlson, 2013). To understand our meanings of the world and surrounding we need to think about our experiences previously and this process is described as the mind and knowledge of knowing (Metlzer, 2003; Smit & Fritz, 2008). Another concept of symbolic

interactionism is the self in which individuals recognize the differences between I and me and then develop their identity (Carlson, 2013). When individuals develop, it takes place in a social context with others. When individuals are a part of an organization or profession, their identity is created, these experiences and meanings of the professional organization can explain how the group interacts and how they share the meanings (Carlson, 2013).

Members of a livestock organization create their meaning through interactions and experiences, this research is informed by symbolic interactionism because it shifts away from the organization itself and onto the individuals within the organization. Rather than being concerned with the organization, it seeks to understand the individuals within the organization and how they make meaning from their interactions and experiences within the system (Carlson, 2013). The symbolic interactionism informed my study because of my vision of understanding how individuals construct their meaning and lived experiences of serving in leadership roles and interactions with others. To understand individual's experiences, I had to put myself in their place and learn their point of view and their meanings of their experiences and youth development (Crotty, 1998). In addition, prior to this research, I had to address my own bias toward the subject of youth development and positive youth and adult interactions.

## **Research Objectives**

The first step in the collection process was to determine research objectives. The research objectives included:

1. Describe the perceptions of youth and adult interactions by those in youth leadership positions and the adult leaders in a trade industry.
2. Describe the experiences of youth and adult leaders in a leadership role within a trade industry.

3. Determine youth and adult leaders' expectations of each other when in leadership positions.
4. Determine the knowledge of positive youth development of junior board members, ambassadors, and adult leaders in a trade industry.

These research objectives were answered using both quantitative and qualitative methods.

This research study was approved by Kansas State University Institution Review Board (Appendix A).

### **Quantitative Instrumentation**

Researchers adapted and modified the Involvement and Interaction Rating scale developed by Jones (2004) (Appendix B). The Involvement and Interaction Rating scale measures the perceptions and involvement of youth and adults while working together (Jones, 2004). Researchers modified the Involvement and Interaction Rating scale to address the perceptions of junior board members, ambassadors and adults all working together within the American Hereford Association on various events like the National Junior Hereford Expo and Leadership Conferences. Both youth and adults were asked to rate their perceptions on a 10-point scale with constructs that included youth, adult involvement, and youth and adult interactions (Jones, 2004). There were two sections that were added to the Involvement and Interaction Rating scale to fit the needs of this study, these two sections included junior board involvement and ambassador involvement. Jones (2004) developed the instrument and used a ten-point scale, 10-9 (excellent), 8-7 (good), 6-5 (fair), 4-3 (poor), 2-1 (very poor). Within the instrument, questions included various items that were formatted as bipolar statements (ex: a positive and a negative statement). Items and statements from the Involvement and Interaction Rating scales with added sections had a total of 67 statements. These statements as indicated by

Jones (2004) were designed from previous research on existing instruments (Camino, 2000, Yohalem, 2003, Zeldin et al., 2008). The Likert type statements/items were interval in nature to fit the context of previous researchers (Bading et al., 2011, Jones, 2004). Statements were reverse coded to reflect a positive perspective.

The Involvement and Interaction Rating Scale measured junior board involvement with the American Hereford Association. The statements in the junior board involvement and the ambassador interaction section measured their willingness to take on projects, responsibilities such as making meetings on time, their commitment to projects, and their ability to share concerns and opinions (youth voice). If junior board members and ambassadors rated their involvement as high that meant that they took on a lot of initiatives to commit to projects, felt they were responsible for time management and were able to voice concerns within the Hereford Association. In the adult involvement construct, statements measured the adult's willingness to accept youth, the ability to teach each other, their perceptions on their ability to encourage youth to lead, and work together. If a low rating was detected in the adult involvement construct it meant that adults only worked with other adults and did not guide or accept youth to lead. The statements in the youth and adult involvement construct measured how well youth and adults get along, how comfortable they are when working with each other, and how considerate adults are of the youth and their opinions. A high rating of youth and adult interactions indicated that youth and adults work well together and engage in equal opportunities for both to make decisions. If adults and youth rated their interaction as high, it also meant that there was mutual respect. The last construct, junior board and ambassador involvement included statements that the junior board and the ambassadors get along well and seem comfortable working with each other in addition they consult each other on projects and work together with mutual respect. A high rating

of junior board and ambassador interaction meant that the junior board and the ambassadors interact together well and show mutual respect.

The Involvement and Interaction Rating scale was reviewed by a panel of experts prior to its distribution. This panel of experts consisted of four faculty members from Kansas State University, two faculty members in Communications and Agricultural Education, one faculty member in Leadership Studies, one faculty member in Applied Human Sciences and a content expert from outside Kansas State University. Several edits were made based on the feedback received.

Cronbachs alpha was measured to test for reliability of the instrument. According to Churchill (1979) Cronbach's alpha of .60 or higher is acceptable. The instrument contained three constructs of youth involvement, adult involvement, and youth and adult interactions. To fit the context of this study, youth involvement included two constructs: junior board involvement and ambassador involvement. Adult involvement included the adult involvement with youth, and the youth and adult interaction construct included youth and adult interaction, and the junior board and ambassador involvement (See Table 3.1).

**Table 3.1. Constructs of the Modified Involvement and Interaction Rating Scale**

Construct	Measures
<b>Junior Board Involvement</b>	Perceptions of the Junior Board Members initiative to take on projects, responsibilities for tasks, helping one another, sharing ideas that matter to them, have the information they need to make decisions and have an equal vote in the decision-making process.
<b>Ambassador Involvement</b>	Perceptions of the Ambassadors initiative to take on projects, responsibilities for tasks, helping one another, sharing ideas that matter to them, have the information they need to

<b>Adult Involvement</b>	make decisions and have an equal vote in the decision-making process.
<b>Youth Adult Interaction Indicators</b>	Perceptions adult's willingness to accept youth leadership, listen to the suggestions of youth, encourage youth to come up with their own ideas, and learn from one another.
<b>Junior Board/Ambassador Interaction Indicators</b>	The perceptions of youth and adults get along and seem comfortable working together, adults provide direction and mentoring for youth, adults go with the decision of the youth, youth and adults work separately on tasks, adults are considerate of youth opinions, youth and adults engage in respectful conversations.
	The perceptions of junior board provide direction and mentoring for ambassadors, junior board/ambassadors are considerate of each other's opinions, junior board and ambassadors engage in respectful conversations.

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A Cronbachs alpha was measured for each construct, Junior Board Involvement (.929), Ambassador Involvement (.842), Adult Involvement (.647), Youth and Adult Involvement (.838), and Junior Board and Ambassador involvement (.815). Changes were made to improve the reliability prior to administering and the post hoc reliability Cronbach's alpha revealed slight changes for each construct this included junior board involvement (.808), ambassador involvement (.819), adult interaction (.660), youth and adult interaction (.890), and junior board and ambassador involvement (.882).

In addition to the Involvement and Interaction rating scale identifying their perceptions, the scale also measured the relationships individuals have with one another (Jones, 2004). These scales were embedded within the original constructs. Jones (2004) identified preexisting subthemes that these relationships fit into. These subthemes include, youth voice, youth



responsibility, mutual respect, mutual learning, decision making, obligation, community, civility, and adult support.

*Youth voice.* Youth voice was defined as the opportunity for a youth to express their thoughts, ideas and share their concerns within the organization they are a part of (Serido et al., 2011). There were eight items that composed the youth voice subtheme these included.

From the junior board involvement construct.

1) Junior Board members always have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions/ Junior Board members never have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions.'

2) Junior Board members frequently share ideas that matter to them/ Junior Board members rarely share ideas about things that matter to them.

3) Junior Board members do not have an equal vote in the decision-making process/ Junior Board members have an equal vote in the decision-making process.

From the Ambassador Involvement construct:

4) Ambassadors always have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions/ambassadors never have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions.

5) Ambassadors frequently share ideas that matter to them/ Ambassadors rarely share ideas about things that matter to them.

6) Ambassadors do not have equal vote in the decision-making process/Ambassadors have an equal vote in the decision-making process.

From the Adult involvement construct:

7) Adults never take the youth seriously/ adults always take the youth seriously.

8) Adults command youth to follow directions of the adults/ adults encourage youth to come up with their own ideas.

There were five items that were reverse coded. A pilot study was conducted and deemed a Cronbachs alpha score .714 for youth voice. The post hoc reliability score for the theme youth voice was .728.

*Youth responsibility.* Youth responsibility was defined as a youth's duties, job, and tasks that should be carried out within the organization and the youth's ability to carry out the task (Jones, 2004). There were seven items that composed youth responsibility subtheme, these included:

1) Junior Board members take a lot of initiative working on projects/ Junior Board members take little initiative to work on projects.

2) Junior Board members are sitting around with nothing to do/ Junior Board members are busy with several tasks.

3) Junior Board members arrive to meetings and events on time/ Junior Board members show up late for meetings and events.

4) Junior Board members are given little or no responsibilities for specific tasks or assignments/ Junior Board members are given major responsibilities for specific tasks or assignments.

From the Ambassador construct:

5) Ambassadors take a lot of initiative to work on projects/ Ambassadors take little initiative to work on projects.

6) Ambassadors are sitting around with nothing to do/ ambassadors are busy with several tasks.

7) Ambassadors are given little or no responsibilities for specific tasks/ Ambassadors are given responsibilities for specific tasks.

There were four items that were reverse coded. Cronbach's alpha for youth responsibility was .841. Post hoc reliability Cronbach's alpha for the subtheme youth responsibility revealed a .695. Although the post hoc reliability decreased, researchers still deemed the Cronbachs alpha as acceptable given that .695 was close to .70.

*Mutual Respect.* Mutual respect was defined as youth and adults being respectful of each other and their opinions, not only youth and adult relationships but youth to youth relationships.

Mutual respect also means how considerate youth are of their peers' opinions and ideas.

Twelve items comprised the subtheme of mutual respect from the adult interaction construct, the youth-adult interaction construct and the junior board and ambassador involvement construct. From the adult involvement construct:

- 1) Adults never totally take over everything when working on projects and activities/  
adults always take over everything when working on projects and activities.

From the youth and adult involvement construct items that comprised mutual respect theme included:

- 2) Adults are very considerate of youth opinions/adults are not considerate of youth opinions.
- 3) Youth are not at all considerate of adult opinions/ youth are very considerate of adult opinions.
- 4) Youth/adults always engage in respectful conversations/ youth and adults never engage in respectful conversations.

5) Youth do not trust adults to handle power responsibly/youth trust adults to handle power responsibly.

6) Adults trust youth to handle power responsibly/ adults do not trust youth to handle power responsibly.

From the Junior Board and ambassador construct:

7) Junior Board members do not consult with ambassadors on projects and activities/Junior Board members actively and consistently consult with ambassadors on projects and activities.

8) Junior Board members are very considerate of Ambassador opinions/ Junior Board members are not at all considerate of the Ambassador opinions.

9) Ambassadors are not at all considerate of Junior Board members' opinions/Ambassadors are very considerate of Junior Board members opinions.

10) Junior Board members Ambassadors always engage in respectful conversations/Junior Board members and Ambassadors never engage in respectful conversations.

11) Junior Board members do not trust Ambassadors to handle power responsible/Junior Board members trust Ambassadors to handle power responsibly.

12) Ambassadors trust Junior Board to handle power responsibly/Ambassadors do not trust Junior Board members to handle power responsibly.

Five items were reverse coded, Cronbach's Alpha was .641 for mutual respect.

Researchers slightly changed wording on the mutual respect items to increase post hoc

Cronbachs Alpha. The Cronbachs Alpha post hoc was .836.

*Mutual Learning.* Mutual learning was defined as youth and adults learning together in their leadership roles and helping each other develop skills (Jones, 2004). A fourth subtheme that was developed by Jones (2004) and included ten items.

From the Junior Board construct:

- 1) Junior Board members help one another in developing new skills/ Junior Board members do not help one another in developing new skills.

From the Ambassador construct:

- 2) Ambassadors help one another in developing new skills/ Ambassadors do not help one another in developing new skills.

From the Adult construct:

- 3) Adults learn new skills from one another/ adults do not learn new skills from one another.

From the youth and adult interaction construct:

- 4) Youth and adults indicate mutual learning from one another/youth and adults learn very little from one another.
- 5) Youth and adults rarely help one another develop new skills/ youth and adults frequently help one another develop new skills.
- 6) Youth and adults work separately on projects and tasks/youth and adults work together as partners on projects and tasks.

From the Junior Board and Ambassador involvement construct:

- 7) Junior Board members provide direction and mentoring to the Ambassadors/Junior Board members provide little or no direction and mentoring for Ambassador.

8) Junior Board members work separately on projects and tasks/Junior Board members and Ambassadors work together as partners on projects and tasks.

9) Junior Board members and Ambassadors indicate mutual learning from one another/Junior Board members and Ambassadors learn little from each other.

10) Junior Board members and Ambassadors rarely help one another develop new skills/Junior Board members and Ambassadors frequently help one another develop new skills.

Reverse coding occurred on three items to reflect a positive perspective. Cronbachs alpha was calculated at .858. The post hoc reliability for the subtheme mutual learning included .807. *Decision Making*. Decision making was defined as an individual's perceptions on making choices for themselves rather than the adult.

There were ten items that relate to the decision-making subtheme. These include from the Junior Board construct:

1) Junior Board members rely on themselves to make key decisions/Junior Board members make few decisions for themselves often relying on the decisions of adults,

2) Junior Board members have full access to information that is needed to make decisions/ Junior Board members have very little access to information that is needed to make decisions.

From the Ambassador construct:

3) Ambassadors rely on themselves to make key decisions/ Ambassadors make few decisions for themselves often relying on the decisions of the adults.

4) Ambassadors have full access to information that is needed to make decisions/ Ambassadors have very little access to information that is needed to make decisions.

From the youth and adult interaction construct:

5) Youth always go along with the decision of the adults/ youth never go along with the adults and always make their own decisions.

6) Youth and adults often agree on most decisions/ youth and adults rarely agree with one another.

7) Youth rely on the experiences of adults when making decisions/youth make decisions based on their own experiences.

From the Junior Board and Ambassador involvement construct:

8) Junior Board members always go along with the decision of the Ambassadors/ Junior Board members never go along with Ambassadors and almost always make their own decisions.

9) Junior Board members and Ambassadors often agree on most decisions/ Junior Board members and Ambassadors rarely agree with one another.

10) Junior Board members rely on the experiences of the Ambassadors when making decisions/Junior Board members make decisions based on their own experiences.

Four of the items were reversed coded, and .576 was the Cronbachs alpha for the decision-making theme. With a low of Cronbach's alpha, prior to the study, researchers modified existing statements to help increase the Cronbach's alpha post study. The post study Cronbachs Alpha was .607. As the Cronbachs alpha increased post hoc researchers felt that the Cronbachs alpha was acceptable for the study.

*Community Obligation.* Community obligation is defined as youth and adults having an interest in and a commitment to helping the community improve (Jones, 2004). There were several statements that correlated with the community obligation subtheme these included from the Junior Board involvement construct:

1) Junior Board members are not fully committed to their duties/ Junior Board members are fully committed to their duties.

2) Junior Board members are very excited about their involvement with projects/Junior Board members have little or no interest in being involved with projects.

3) Junior Board members are not concerned with community change/Junior Board members are very concerned with community change.

From the Ambassador involvement construct:

4) Ambassadors are not fully committed to their duties/Ambassadors are fully committed to their duties.

5) Ambassadors are very excited about their involvement in projects/Ambassadors have little or no interest in being involved with projects.

6) Ambassadors are not concerned with community change/Ambassadors are very concerned with community change.

From the adult involvement construct:

7) Adults have no interest in being involved with projects/ adults are very excited about being involved with projects.

8) Adults are very concerned with community change/ adults are not concerned with community change.

Of the eight items five of the items were reverse coded to be more positive. The community obligation subtheme indicated a .321 Cronbach's alpha. One potential reason that the community obligation Cronbach's Alpha was low might have been because of the topic of community change. The goal for leaders in the livestock industry is not necessarily community change rather than developing youth into leaders. However, characteristics of good leaders



change communities and lead communities to better outcomes. Researchers checked for mistakes and modified existing statements within the Interaction and Adult rating scale to increase Cronbach's Alpha. The post hoc Cronbach's Alpha was .741.

*Civility.* Civility was defined as having the politeness, courtesy, and behaviors one demonstrates in conversation and speech. Six items represented civility on the Involvement and Interaction rating scale these included from the youth and adult interaction indicators:

1) Youth and adults get along well together/there is arguing tension among youth and adults.

2) Youth appear uneasy and intimidated by the adults/youth seem comfortable working with adults.

3) Adults seem comfortable working with youth/ adults appear uneasy and afraid of the youth.

From the Junior Board and Ambassador construct:

4) Junior Board and Ambassadors get along well/there is arguing tension among the Junior Board and Ambassadors.

5) Junior Board members appear uneasy and intimidated by the Ambassadors/Junior Board members seem comfortable working with the Ambassadors.

6) Ambassadors seem comfortable working with Junior Board members/Ambassadors appear uneasy and afraid of Junior Board members.

Cronbach's alpha for this subtheme was .538, and two were reverse coded. A low Cronbach's alpha was revealed, this might have been because the population of which was piloted did not have 'ambassadors' rather 'interns' although it was stressed to interchange the word ambassador with intern. As previously indicated, civility is important to leadership as

individuals need to work with all people regardless of their leadership role. To increase the Cronbachs Alpha post hoc, researcher's changed wording slightly on some statements, the Cronbachs Alpha post hoc reliability revealed .736.

*Adult support.* Adult support included statements in which adults were willing to accept the youth and instances in which the youth felt accepted (Jones, 2004). There were five items that related to the adult support subtheme. These include from the adult involvement construct:

1) Adults display a willingness to accept and nurture youth leadership/adults display a sense of wanting to control youth.

2) Adults tend to be followers of youth leadership/adults display a tendency to want to guide youth.

3) Adults always listen to the suggestions of youth/adults never listen to the suggestions of youth.

From the youth and adult involvement construct:

4) Adults do not consult with youth on project/activities at all/ adults actively and consistently consult with youth on projects and activities.

5) Adults provide direction and mentoring for youth/adults provide little or no mentoring for youth.

Two items were reverse coded. Cronbach alpha was 0.60 for the adult support subtheme. The adult support subtheme indicated a low Cronbach's alpha, this might have been because of the low sample size within the pilot study group. Statements were slightly changed in this subtheme to help increase Cronbach's Alpha post hoc. The Cronbachs Alpha post hoc was .506. Although a low Cronbachs alpha, because of the large increase, researchers chose to include the adult support subtheme within the research.

## Qualitative

Interviews with individuals from the American Hereford Association served as a way to clarify findings from the quantitative portion of this study. Through the interviews I as the researcher was able to understand and dig deeper into the lived experiences of those within the association. The semi-structured interview included thirteen open-ended questions. Creswell and Poth (2018) provided insight on how to conduct interviews and their suggestions were followed in this study. I determined open-ended questions that would help answer the research questions of the study. These questions were asked to individuals who volunteered to be a part of the interview process through an email invitation. These individuals were asked to participate in a one-hour interview based on their leadership experiences and perceptions of youth and adult partnerships within the American Hereford Association. Please see Appendix C for interview protocol and questions. Interviews took place over Zoom because of the location of the researcher and the participants. All interviews were recorded on Zoom and transcribed into a word document. The interviews were conducted in November 2022. A total of 12 interviews were conducted. This included five previous and/or current junior board members, three previous ambassadors, and four adults.

A pilot study was conducted before use in the field. The pilot study was conducted with a similar and small group of individuals in a different livestock organization. The individuals in this pilot study provided insights as to ways in which the interview process could be improved. Suggestions were to provide more clarity in the interview questions and to include more definitions of the words when using them in a sentence. Researchers reworded some of the questions for more clarity and during the interviews researchers made sure to clarify what was

meant, provided more definitions, and paused to allow for participants to gather their thought process.

## **Data Collection**

### **Quantitative**

Participants were contacted through Qualtrics email distribution service. Researchers followed the recommendations of Dillman et al., (2014) when contacting participants (See Appendix D). Participants were contacted first by email from the Youth Activities Director of the AHA to inform them that a survey would be coming their way. This prenotification email provided information about the researcher and asked for participation in the research, this notification was sent on October 10<sup>th</sup>. The first email that contained the link to complete the survey was sent on October 12<sup>th</sup> from the researcher. This first email with the link provided background information on the research purpose, encouraged participation, and provided contact information in case participants had questions about the research. A few days later on October 15<sup>th</sup>, a first reminder was sent. This reminder again indicated the purpose of the research, background of positive youth development, encouraged participation and provided contact information for the researcher in case participants had questions. Researchers then waited a few more days prior to sending out the second email reminder. The second email reminder containing the link to the survey was sent on October 21<sup>st</sup>. This reminder letter gave background on positive youth development, the purpose of the research, and indicated that their feedback would be kept confidential. The third email reminder that contained the link to the survey was sent on Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>. This email reminder was shorter and encouraged participation in the research, indicating that their feedback would be kept confidential, and that group data would be shared with the AHA. The fourth and final email reminder was sent on November 4<sup>th</sup>. This email reminder served as

the last reminder for participants, thanking those that had already participated and encouraging those that had not taken the survey to do so. The survey closed within two days of sending the final email reminder.

## **Qualitative**

One on one semi structured interviews were conducted to better understand the perceptions and experiences of those individuals involved in the leadership positions within the American Hereford Association. These interviews would further explore both the positive and negative perspectives that affected the youth and adult interactions and partnership and provide a rich description of the program quality. For interview protocol please see Appendix C.

Individuals volunteered to be a part of the interview process through an invitation email (See Appendix E). Researchers sent an email invitation to the population of the study asking for their participation in an interview. This email reminded the participants that they had received a survey link from myself and that I am now asking them to do a follow-up interview. This email provided the purpose of the research and stated that their answers would be kept confidential and that names would be changed to pseudonyms. Participants were asked to respond yes or no to participating in an interview. Those that indicated 'yes', they were willing to participate in an interview were asked to provide days and times they would be available within the next few days. I then corresponded with several individuals setting up Zoom meetings for interviews with both youth and adults.

A total of 12 interviews took place over the month of November 2022. Interviews were held through Zoom because of the location of the researcher and the participants. The interviews were transcribed and recorded through Zoom and stored on a secure computer and in the cloud-based storage of Kansas State University. The transcripts were copied into a Microsoft Word

document from Zoom. Once copied and formatted into Microsoft Word, all identification was removed, and names of participants were changed to pseudonyms. Once identification was removed the process of analyzing the data began.

## **Data Analysis**

### **Quantitative**

Upon completion of survey collection, the survey results were analyzed using SPSS software. Means and standard deviations were calculated within specific items in each construct and reported in the findings section of Chapter 4. The scale ranged from one to ten, and (1-2) fair- (9-10) excellent.

In addition to the means and standard deviation, an Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) was calculated to determine any statistical differences between means. An Analysis of Variance reveals any differences between junior board members, ambassadors, and adults in their ratings of the perceptions of interactions between youth and adults. The ANOVA was used to determine if there were any statistical differences between positions (junior board member, ambassador, volunteer or staff) on their rating of perceptions of youth and adult interactions and adult interactions.

### **Non-Response Error**

Linder, Murphy, and Roberts (2001) stated that non-response error happens when individuals within the same sample respond differently or do not provide a usable response in survey research. There are several ways to handle the non-response error as suggested by Linder et al., (2001), one way is to compare early to late respondents as the late respondents are known to be like the non-respondents (Linder et al., 2001). Following the guidance of Linder et al., (2001) a successive wave of responses should be used to determine the late respondents in a

study. This wave of late respondents is recommended to be at a minimum of 30 responses (Linder et al., 2001). Linder et al., (2001) also suggests that if the researcher cannot obtain at least 30 responses from the last stimulus then they can move up to previous stimulus and included them as their late responses. Researchers used the respondents from the first stimulus, (those that responded from the first contact) and compared them to those that responded after the first contact. Of the 59 useable surveys, 29 (49.1%) of the respondents were classified as early respondents and 30 (50.8%) were considered late. The early and late respondents were compared on construct areas of interest to determine if any statistical significance was found between the two groups. An independent t-test was used to compare the means of the early and late respondents on the construct youth and adult interaction and adult involvement. No statistical significance was found in any of the statement items in the construct. Since no statistical significance was observed between early and late respondents, one can generalize the results of this study to the target population of the 80 individuals selected for this study (Linder et al., 2001).

## **Qualitative**

Once the identification was removed from the transcript, the transcript was read and reviewed in Microsoft Word, and the process of thematic coding was conducted with notes and memos to create a higher-level meaning (Miles et al., 2014). Thematic analysis is a way to identify patterns within a data set and organize the data into different meanings (Braun & Clark, 2012). While conducting the analysis an audit trail was used which helps with validation and dependability. Validation and dependability are needed so that others can determine how the decisions were made (Ary et al., 2010).

The first step in the thematic analysis process was to become familiar with the data, to do this, I read the transcripts and listened to the audio. During this process, I took notes and identified the main themes that had emerged. While reading the data it allowed me to better understand and think about what the data means (Braun & Clark, 2012). After I became familiar with the data, initial codes began to develop. I began with themes in mind, while working through the transcripts every statement that was relevant to the topic was clustered into a theme. Themes included interactions, experiences, expectations, and knowledge. The process to get to themes was based on an inductive technique, this means that patterns were generated based off from the raw data (Braun & Clark, 2012). Once I had identified the themes, I trained another individual on what to look for within the main themes. This separate analysis occurred as the individual looked for accuracy, and to make sure that statements meant what they were intended to mean. Once completed by co-analyst, we met and walked through the data once more. While working together we searched for themes that fit and did not fit with the research.

After the data were categorized into themes in Microsoft Word, the data contained within each theme was transferred into an Excel document. Once in the Excel document, I analyzed the data into codes. These codes included youth voice, youth responsibility, mutual respect, mutual learning, community obligation and adult support. This process to get to each code consisted of looking at the data within each theme, line by line which uses the actual language found in the qualitative data (Saldana, 2009). Both youth and adult coding were categorized separately but were on different spreadsheets in an Excel document due to the questions asked. My lens as a scholar and having the knowledge of positive youth development was in front of me while I analyzed the themes into the codes for each transcript. The adult interviews were categorized using the same method, themes were analyzed from the data, then categorized by code within



each of the theme. After the conclusion of categorizing the themes into codes, the transcripts were read over again, and the recording of the interviews were listened to, to double check for any other themes or codes that would have been missed and emerged from the data. The differences in the themes and analysis between adults and youth are discussed in Chapter 4.

## **Conclusion**

The target population for this research study consisted of previous and current junior board members, previous ambassadors, volunteers, and staff within the American Hereford Association. The AHA was selected because of their location, and opportunities they present to junior members being one of the largest junior beef breed associations. This study utilized a mixed methods design specifically an explanatory sequential design in which quantitative design preceded the qualitative methods. To collect data, researchers used and modified the Involvement and Interaction Rating Scale developed by Jones (2004). This scale allowed researchers to understand the perceptions of both youth and adults working together on projects in the AHA. In addition to the survey, researchers also conducted one on one interviews that enabled a more in-depth focus on the experiences that participants have while serving in a leadership role within the National Junior Hereford Association (NJHA). This chapter also addressed the researcher's subjectivity which included her work involved within a positive youth development program. Rigor and trustworthiness were stated in this chapter which included both internal and external validity. Researchers also stated their epistemological stance which includes a constructionist approach in which humans construct their meanings through their interactions. This is further explained through a pragmatism approach and interpretivism. The chapter concludes with how data was analyzed through SPSS and coding data.

## **Chapter 4 - Results**

The purpose of this research study was to describe the perceptions, experiences, knowledge of youth development, and expectations adults have of youth leaders in a trade industry organization, the American Hereford Association. This chapter presents the findings from both quantitative and qualitative data. Findings in this chapter are organized first by quantitative results, including the demographics of participants, means and standard deviation for each construct area, statistical significance of the Involvement and Interaction Rating scale with ANOVAs and post hoc tests, followed by interview results in the qualitative section.

### **Quantitative Results**

#### **Demographics of the Participants**

Of the 59 individuals that participated in the quantitative portion of this study (See Table 4.1), 11 (18.6%) were previous ambassadors, 11 (18.6%) were current junior board members, 18 (30.5%) were previous junior board members, 10 (16.9%) were adult volunteers within the AHA, and 9 (15.3%) were adult staff members in the AHA. Of the respondents 36 (61%) were female and 23 (39%) were male. The age of the respondents varied from 17-66+. Thirty-four of the respondents were age 17-25 (57.6%), and 9 (15.3%) were between the ages of 26-35. There were two individuals that were between the ages of 36-45 (3.4%), seven (11.9 %) between the ages of 46-55 and four (6.8 %) that were between the age of 56-65. There were three (5.1%) individuals that were over that age of 66. The ten adult leaders of the AHA had been volunteers from one to 16 years. There were four (40.0%) that were volunteers from 1-5 years, and four (40.0%) that were volunteers from 6-10 and two (20.0%) that had been volunteers for 16 years or over. Adult staff participated in the survey (n= 9) had worked at the American Hereford Association from one to over 16 years. There were three (33.3%) individuals that had worked at

the AHA from 1-5 years, and one (11.1%) that had worked at the AHA between 6-10 years. One (11.1%) had worked at the association for 11-15 years, and three (33.3%) had worked for more than 16 years. Additionally, there was one (11.1%) individual that chose not to response. Of the participants that completed the survey, 45 (76.3%) of the individuals lived in a rural or farm setting, 9 (15.3%) lived in a suburban setting, and 5 (8.5%) lived in an urban or city setting.

**Table 4.1. Demographics of American Hereford Association Participants of the Survey**

	<i>F</i>	<i>%</i>	<i>Range</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>Mode</i>	<i>SD</i>
Gender (n=59)						
Male	23	39.0				
Female	36	61.0				
Age (n=59)			17-66+	2.64 (26-35)	1 (17-25)	2.42
17-25	34	57.6				
26-35	9	15.3				
36-45	2	3.4				
46-55	7	11.9				
56-65	4	6.8				
66+	3	5.1				
Position with the AHA (n=59)						
Previous Ambassador	11	18.6				
Current Junior Board Member	11	18.6				
Previous Junior Board Member	18	30.5				
Adult Volunteer	10	16.9				
Adult Staff Member	9	15.3				
Years of Volunteer Work (n=10)						
1-5	4	40.0				
6-10	4	40.0				
16+	2	20.0				
Years Employed by the AHA (n=9)						
1-5	3	33.3				
6-10	1	11.1				
11-15	1	11.1				
16+	3	33.3				
Non-respondent	1	11.1				
Location of Participant (n=59)						
Rural/Farm	45	76.3				

Suburban	9	15.2
Urban/City	5	8.4

*Note:* Percentages may not add up to 100 due to rounding. Location of Participants Categories adapted from Jones, K.R. (2004). An assessment of perceptions and experiences in community-based youth adult relationships. Doctoral dissertation. Pennsylvania State University, University Park, PA.

## Junior Board Involvement

The relationship and interaction quality were based on a ten-point scale for all the constructs, youth (junior board and ambassador) involvement, adult involvement, youth and adult interaction and youth to youth interaction. The scale was developed by Jones (2004) and ranged from 1-10, with 1-2 very poor, 3-4 -poor, 5-6 fair, 7-8 good, 9-10 excellent. Overall averages for each construct were calculated.

The overall mean score for the junior board involvement was 8.40 which indicated a good to excellent rating. Statements in the junior board involvement construct measured the junior boards overall interaction. These statements included junior board members are given little to no responsibilities/ junior board members are given major responsibilities which revealed a good rating at 8.69 ( $SD = 1.84$ ), and junior board members never have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions/ junior board members always have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions which also revealed a good rating at 8.00, ( $SD = 2.30$ ). In addition, junior board members are not committed to their duties/ junior board members are committed to their duties was a good rating at 8.40 ( $SD = 1.62$ ). Please see Table 4.2 with a full list of means and standard deviations for each item.

**Table 4.2. Means and Standard Deviations for the Construct Junior Board Involvement**

Item/Statement	Mean	SD
10.1 Junior Board members take little initiative working on projects.: Junior Board members take a lot of initiative working on projects.	8.50	1.30
10.2 Junior Board members are sitting around with nothing to do.: Junior Board members are busy with several tasks.	8.61	1.53

10.3 Junior Board members show up late for meetings/events.: Junior Board members arrive to meetings/events on time.:	8.45	1.50
10.4 Junior Board members are given little or no responsibilities for specific tasks or assignments.: Junior Board members are given major responsibilities for specific tasks or assignments.	8.69	1.84
10.5 Adults make decisions for junior board members; Junior Board members make decisions themselves.	7.40	1.95
10.6 Junior board members do not have the information they need to make key decisions.: Junior Board members have information they need to make decisions.	8.54	1.35
10.7 Junior Board members never have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions.: Junior Board members always have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions.	8.00	2.30
10.8 Junior Board members rarely share ideas about things that matter to them.: Junior Board members frequently share ideas that matter to them.	9.01	1.04
10.9 Junior Board members do not have an equal vote in the decision-making process.: Junior Board members have an equal vote in the decision-making process.	8.11	1.92
10.10 Junior Board members do not help one another learn new skills.: Junior Board members help one another to learn new skills.	8.71	1.62
10.11 Junior Board members are not fully committed to their duties.: Junior Board members are fully committed to their duties.	8.40	1.62
10.12 Junior Board members have little or no interest in being involved with projects.: Junior Board members are very excited about their involvement with projects.:	8.91	1.13
10.13 Junior Board members are not concerned with community change.: Junior Board members are very concerned with community change.	7.88	1.74
Total	8.40	1.60

*Note:* Rating is left to right, 1-2 very poor, 3-4 -poor, 5-6 fair, 7-8 good, 9-10 excellent. The negative statement is on the left and the positive statement is on the right.

## Ambassador Involvement

In the ambassador construct, the overall mean score was 7.70 or good for ambassador involvement. Statements in the ambassador construct included the same statements that were found in the junior board involvement construct. These included ambassadors rarely share ideas that matter to them/ambassadors frequently share ideas that matter to them ( $M = 7.49$ , ( $SD = 1.95$ ). In addition, ambassadors do not have the information they need to make decisions/ambassadors have the information they need to make decisions ( $M = 7.54$ ,  $SD = 2.05$ ). The mean score for ambassadors are given little or no responsibilities for specific tasks or assignments/Ambassadors are given major responsibilities for specific tasks or assignments was 8.52 ( $SD = 1.56$ ). The item, adults make decisions for ambassadors/ambassadors make decisions themselves computed an average score of 5.18 ( $SD = 2.76$ ) which resulted in a fair rating. For a complete listing of the averages of each item please see Table 4.3.

**Table 4.3. Means and Standard Deviations for the Construct Ambassador Involvement**

Item/Statement	Mean	SD
11.1 Ambassadors members take little initiative working on projects.: Ambassadors take a lot of initiative working on projects.	8.10	1.54
11.2 Ambassadors are sitting around with nothing to do.: Ambassadors are busy with several tasks.	8.45	1.65
10.3 Ambassadors show up late for meetings/events.: Ambassadors arrive to meetings/events on time.:	8.79	1.70
10.4 Ambassadors are given little or no responsibilities for specific tasks or assignments.: Ambassadors are given major responsibilities for specific tasks or assignments.	8.52	1.56
10.5 Adults make decisions for Ambassadors; Ambassadors make decisions themselves.	5.18	2.76
10.6 Ambassadors do not have the information they need to make key decisions.: Ambassadors have information they need to make decisions.	7.54	2.05

10.7 Ambassadors never have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions.: Ambassadors always have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions.	7.37	2.02
10.8 Ambassadors rarely share ideas about things that matter to them.: Ambassadors frequently share ideas that matter to them.	7.49	1.95
10.9 Ambassadors do not have an equal vote in the decision-making process.: Ambassadors have an equal vote in the decision-making process.	5.67	2.43
10.10 Ambassadors do not help one another learn new skills.: Ambassadors help one another to learn new skills.	8.16	2.20
10.11 Ambassadors are not fully committed to their duties.: Ambassadors are fully committed to their duties.	8.79	1.27
10.12 Ambassadors have little or no interest in being involved with projects.: Ambassadors are very excited about their involvement with projects.	8.54	1.76
10.13 Ambassadors are not concerned with community change.: Ambassadors are very concerned with community change.	7.37	1.91
Total	7.70	1.90

*Note:* Rating is left to right, 1-2 very poor, 3-4 -poor, 5-6 fair, 7-8 good, 9-10 excellent. The negative statement is on the left and the positive statement is on the right.

## Adult Interaction

The adult interaction construct had an overall summated mean score of 7.90 or good. These statements included adults display a sense of wanting to control youth/ adults display a willingness to guide and nurture youth leadership which yielded a good rating ( $M = 8.83$ ,  $SD = 1.40$ ) , adults never listen to the suggestions of youth/ adults always listen to the suggestions of youth ( $M = 8.08$ ,  $SD = 1.89$ ) a good rating, and adults command youth to follow the direction of the adults/adults encourage the youth to come up with their own ideas ( $M = 8.36$ ,  $SD = 1.53$ ) another good rating. The statement adults tend to want to follow youth leadership/adults guide

youth leaders computed an average score of good to fair ( $M = 6.94, 2.62$ ). Table 4.4 identifies the average of all statements in the adult involvement construct.

**Table 4.4. Means and Standard Deviations for the Adult Involvement Construct**

Item/Statement	Mean	SD
12.1 Adults display a sense of wanting to control youth: Adults display a willingness to accept and nurture youth.	8.83	1.40
12.2 Adults tend to want to be followers of youth leadership:/ Adults tend to guide youth leaders.	6.94	2.62
12.3 Adults never listen to the suggestions or youth:/ Adults listen to the suggestion of youth.	8.08	1.89
12.4 Adults never totally take over everything when working on projects:/ Adults always take over everything when working on projects.	6.66	2.15
12.5 Adults do not learn from one another:/ Adults learn from one another.	7.66	2.03
12.6 Adults never take youth seriously:/ Adults always take youth seriously.	8.03	1.69
12.7 Adults command youth to follow the direction of the adults:/ Adults encourage youth to come up with their own ideas.	8.36	1.53
12.8 Adults have no interest in being involved with projects:/ Adults are excited to be involved with projects.	8.79	1.35
12.9 Adults are not concerned with community change:/ Adults are very concerned with community change.	7.66	2.23
Total	7.90	1.87

*Note:* Rating is left to right, 1-2 very poor, 3-4 -poor, 5-6 fair, 7-8 good, 9-10 excellent. The negative statement is on the left and the positive statement is on the right.

## Youth and Adult Interaction

The youth and adult interaction construct resulted in an overall summated mean score of 7.95 which results in good rating. Statements on the youth and adult interaction construct included there is arguing among youth and adults/ youth and adults get along well which revealed an overall mean score of 8.57 ( $SD = 1.52$ ) or good. The statement adults appear uneasy



and afraid of the youth/adults seem comfortable working with youth resulted in a good rating 7.91, ( $SD = 2.10$ ). Youth and adults learn very little from one another/youth and adults indicate mutual learning from one another yielded an average of 8.25 ( $SD = 1.48$ ) or good rating. Please see Table 4.5 for a list of statements and their overall means and standard deviations.

**Table 4.5. Means and Standard Deviations for the Construct Youth and Adult Interaction Indicators**

Item/Statement	Mean	SD
13.1 There is arguing among youth and adults/ youth and adults get along well.	8.57	1.52
13.2 Youth appear intimidated by the adults/youth are comfortable working with adults.	7.91	2.10
13.3 Adults are afraid of the youth/adults are comfortable working with the youth.	8.91	1.46
13.4 Adults do not consult with youth on projects or activities/adults consistently consult with youth on projects or activities.	7.54	1.87
13.5 Adults do not provide direction and mentoring for youth/adults provide direction and mentoring for youth.	9.03	1.14
13.6 Youth never go with the decision of the adult/ youth go with the decision of the adult.	7.54	1.34
13.7 Youth and adults do not agree on most decisions/youth and adults agree on most decisions.	7.44	1.56
13.8 Youth rely on adults to make their own decisions/ youth make their own decisions.	5.91	1.99
13.9 Youth and adults work separately on tasks/ youth and adults work together on tasks.	6.62	2.33
13.10 Youth and adults do not learn from one another/ there is mutual learning between youth and adults.	8.25	1.48
13.11 Youth and adults do not help one another/ youth and adults frequently help one another.	8.67	1.30
13.12 Adults are not considerate of youth opinions/adults are very considerate of youth opinions.	7.52	2.17

13.13 Youth are not considerate of adult opinions/ youth are very considerate of adult opinions.	8.05	1.67
13.14 Youth and adults never engage in respectful conversations/ youth and adults always engage in respectful conversations.	8.81	1.72
13.15 Youth do not trust adults to handle power/ youth trust adults to handle power.	9.03	1.31
13.16 Adults do not trust youth to handle power responsibly/ adults trust youth to handle power responsibly.	7.28	2.22
Total	7.95	1.70

*Note:* Rating is left to right, 1-2 very poor, 3-4 -poor, 5-6 fair, 7-8 good, 9-10 excellent. The negative statement is on the left and the positive statement is on the right.

### **Junior Board and Ambassador Interaction Indicators**

The last construct, which included junior board and ambassador involvement indicated an overall summated mean score of 7.95 which resulted in a good rating. Statements from this construct were the same as the youth and adult construct and included statements such as there is arguing among junior board and ambassadors/ junior board and ambassadors get along well which indicated an overall rating of 8.56, (*SD*, 1.40) or good. The statement ambassadors appear uneasy and afraid of junior board members/ambassadors seem comfortable working with junior board members resulted in an average of 8.19 (*SD* = 2.07) or good standing. Junior board members appear uneasy and afraid of ambassadors/ junior board members seem comfortable working with ambassadors computed an average rating of 9.14 (*SD* = .963) which is excellent. For a full list of items and their means and standard deviations please see Table 4.6 below.

**Table 4.6. Means and Standard Deviations for the Construct Junior Board and Ambassador Indicators**

Item/Statement	Mean	SD
14.1 There is arguing among junior board and ambassadors/ junior board and ambassadors get along well	8.56	1.40
14.2 Junior Board are afraid of the ambassadors/junior board are comfortable working with ambassadors.	9.14	.963
14.3 Ambassadors are afraid of the junior board members/ambassadors are comfortable working with the junior board.	8.19	2.07
14.4 Junior board members do not consult with ambassadors on projects or activities/junior board consistently consults with ambassadors on projects or activities.	6.24	2.57
14.5 Junior Board members do not provide direction and mentoring for ambassadors/junior board members provide direction and mentoring for ambassadors.	7.22	2.20
14.6 Junior board members never go with the decision of the ambassadors/ junior board members go with the decision of the ambassadors.	5.68	2.07
14.7 Junior board members and ambassadors do not agree on most decisions/ junior board and ambassadors agree on most decisions.	8.18	1.29
14.8 Junior board members rely on ambassadors to make their own decisions/ junior board members make their own decisions.	7.29	1.87
14.9 Junior board members and ambassadors work separately on tasks/ junior board members and ambassadors work together on tasks.	6.50	2.61
14.10 Junior board members and ambassadors do not learn from one another/ there is mutual learning between junior board members and ambassadors.	7.79	2.19
14.11 Junior board members and ambassadors do not help one another learn new skills/ junior board and ambassadors frequently help one another.	7.56	2.12
14.12 Junior board members are not considerate of ambassador opinions/junior board members are very considerate of ambassador opinions.	7.25	2.16
14.13 Ambassadors are not considerate of junior board members opinions/ ambassadors are very considerate of junior board members opinions.	7.95	1.53

14.14 junior board members and ambassadors never engage in respectful conversations/ junior board member and ambassadors always engage in respectful conversations.	8.87	1.29
14.15 Junior board members do not trust ambassadors to handle power/ junior board members trust ambassadors to handle power.	7.65	2.10
14.16 Ambassadors do not trust junior board to handle power responsibly/ ambassadors trust junior board members to handle power responsibly.	8.36	1.84
Total	7.95	1.89

*Note:* Rating is left to right, 1-2 very poor, 3-4 -poor, 5-6 fair, 7-8 good, 9-10 excellent. The negative statement is on the left and the positive statement is on the right.

## Youth Responsibility

Several items within the constructs measured youth responsibility. The overall summated mean for these items was 8.52 or a good rating. These items included junior board members do not take a lot of initiative when working on projects/junior board members take a lot of initiative when working on projects ( $M = 8.50$ ,  $SD = 1.30$ ). Ambassadors are given little or no responsibilities for specific tasks/ambassadors are given major responsibilities for specific task or assignments ( $M = 8.52$ ,  $SD = 1.56$ ), junior board members show up late for meetings and events/junior board members arrive to meetings and events on time ( $M = 8.45$ ,  $SD = 1.49$ ). For all the items that made up the youth responsibility construct please see Table 4.7 below.

**Table 4.7. Means and Standard Deviations for the items that measure Youth Responsibility**

Item/Statement	Mean	SD
10.2 Junior board members are sitting around with nothing to do/ junior board members are busy with several tasks.	8.61	1.53
10.4 Junior board members are given little to no responsibilities for assignments and tasks/junior board members are given major responsibilities for specific tasks.	8.70	1.84
11.2 Ambassadors are sitting around with nothing to do/ambassadors are busy with several tasks.	8.45	1.65
11.4 Ambassadors are given little to no responsibilities for specific tasks. Ambassadors are given major responsibilities for tasks.	8.52	1.56
10.1 Junior board members take little initiative working on projects/junior board members take a lot of initiative working on projects.	8.50	1.30
11.1 Ambassadors take little initiative working on projects/ambassadors take a lot of initiative working on projects.	8.10	1.59
10.3 Junior board members show up late for meetings and events/junior board members arrive to meetings and events on time.	8.45	1.49
11.3 Ambassadors show up late for meetings and events/ ambassadors arrive to meetings and events on time.	8.80	1.70
Total	8.52	1.58

*Note:* Rating is left to right, 1-2 very poor, 3-4 -poor, 5-6 fair, 7-8 good, 9-10 excellent. The negative statement is on the left and the positive statement is on the right.

## Decision Making

The overall summated mean score for decision making was 7.08 or good. Various statements that made up the decision-making topic included individuals' perceptions on youth making decisions for themselves. The statement junior board members do not have the information they need to make key decisions/junior board members have the information they need to make decisions noted a mean score of 8.55 ( $SD = 1.36$ ) which correlates to a good to excellent rating. When referencing perceptions made about ambassadors, such as adults make

decisions for ambassadors/ ambassadors make decisions themselves it resulted in a mean score of 5.25 ( $SD = 2.73$ ) or fair rating. The statement, youth rely on the adults when making decisions/youth make decisions on their own resulted in a fair rating at 5.93, ( $SD = 2.00$ ). For a full list of statements that made up the decision-making theme and the means and standard deviations for each statement please refer to Table 4.8.

**Table 4.8. Means and Standard Deviations for the items that measure Decision Making**

Item/Statement	Mean	SD
13.8 Youth rely on the adults when making decisions/youth make decisions on their own.	5.93	2.00
14.8 Junior board members rely on the ambassadors when making decisions/junior board members make decisions on their own.	7.29	1.87
10.5 Adults make decisions for the junior board members/ junior board members make decisions themselves.	7.37	1.95
10.6 Junior board members do not have the information they need to make key decisions/junior board members have the information they need to make key decisions.	8.55	1.36
11.5 Adults make decisions for ambassadors/ambassadors make decisions themselves.	5.25	2.73
11.6 Ambassadors do not have the information they need to make decisions/ambassadors have the information they need to make decisions.	7.53	2.07
13.6 Youth never go with the decision of the adults/youth go with the decision of adults.	7.55	1.35
13.7 Youth and adults do not agree on most decisions/youth and adults agree on most decisions.	7.44	1.58
14.6 Junior board never go with the decision of the ambassadors/junior board go with the decision of the ambassadors.	5.68	2.07
14.7 Junior board members and ambassadors do not agree with one another/ junior board members and ambassadors often agree on most decisions.	8.18	1.29
Total	7.08	1.82

*Note:* Rating is left to right, 1-2 very poor, 3-4 -poor, 5-6 fair, 7-8 good, 9-10 excellent. The negative statement is on the left and the positive statement is on the right.

## Youth Voice

The overall summated mean for youth voice was 7.75 or good. The topic of youth voice was comprised of eight statements these include 1) junior board members never have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions/junior board members always have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions ( $M = 8.00$ ,  $SD = 2.29$ ). 2) Junior board members do not have an equal vote in the decision-making process/junior board members have an equal vote in the decision-making process ( $M = 8.11$ ,  $SD = 1.92$ ). 3) Ambassadors never have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions/ambassadors always have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions ( $M = 7.37$ ,  $SD = 2.02$ ). 4) Ambassadors do not have an equal vote in the decision-making process/ ambassadors have an equal vote in the decision-making process ( $M = 5.67$ ,  $SD = 2.43$ ). 5) Adults never take youth seriously/ adults always take the ideas of youth seriously ( $M = 8.03$ ,  $SD = 1.69$ ). 6) Junior board members rarely share ideas about things that matter to them/junior board members frequently share ideas that matter to them ( $M = 9.01$ ,  $SD = 1.04$ ). 7) Ambassadors rarely share ideas about things that matter to them/ambassadors frequently share ideas that matter to them ( $M = 7.49$ ,  $SD = 1.95$ ), and 8) Adults command youth to follow the direction of adults/adults encourage youth to come up with their own ideas ( $M = 8.35$ ,  $SD = 1.52$ ). For a full list of statements that made up the youth voice theme, please refer to Table 4.9.

**Table 4.9. Means and Standard Deviations for the items that measure Youth Voice**

Item/Statement	Mean	SD
10.7 Junior board members never have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions/junior board members always have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions.	8.00	2.29
10.9 Junior board members do not have an equal vote in the decision-making process/junior board members have an equal vote in the decision-making process.	8.11	1.92
11.7 Ambassadors never have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions/ambassadors always have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions.	7.37	2.02
11.9 Ambassadors do not have an equal vote in the decision-making process/ ambassadors have an equal vote in the decision-making process	5.67	2.43
12.6 Adults never take youth seriously/ adults always take the ideas of youth seriously.	8.03	1.69
10.8 Junior board members rarely share ideas about things that matter to them/junior board members frequently share ideas that matter to them.	9.01	1.04
11.8 Ambassadors rarely share ideas about things that matter to them/ambassadors frequently share ideas that matter to them.	7.49	1.95
12.7 Adults command youth to follow the direction of adults/adults encourage youth to come up with their own ideas.	8.35	1.52
Total	7.75	1.85

*Note:* Rating is left to right, 1-2 very poor, 3-4 -poor, 5-6 fair, 7-8 good, 9-10 excellent. The negative statement is on the left and the positive statement is on the right.

## **Mutual Learning**

There were eight items that measured mutual learning, and the overall summated mean for mutual learning was 7.52 which resulted in a good rating. The statements that measured mutual learning include 1) youth and adults work separately on tasks/youth and adults work together on tasks ( $M = 6.62$ ,  $SD = 2.33$ ) this resulted in a fair rating. 2) junior board members and ambassadors work separately on projects/junior board members and ambassadors work together



on projects ( $M = 6.44$ ,  $SD = 2.63$ ) or fair. 3) A good rating was indicated with the statement junior board members and ambassadors do not help one another learn new skills/junior board members and ambassadors frequently help one another learn new skills ( $M = 7.57$ ,  $SD = 2.10$ ). 4) Junior board members do not help one another learn new skills/ junior board members help one another to learn new skills which indicated a good rating ( $M = 7.57$ ,  $SD = 2.10$ ). A good rating was also indicated for the statement 5) Ambassadors do not help one another learn new skills/ambassadors help one another learn new skills ( $M = 8.71$ ,  $SD = 1.61$ ). 6) Adults do not learn from one another/adults learn from one another ( $M = 7.66$ ,  $SD = 2.03$ ) which yielded a good result. 7) A good rating was also indicated with the statement junior board members provide no direction and mentoring for ambassadors/junior board members provide direction and mentoring to the ambassadors ( $M = 7.20$ ,  $SD = 2.19$ ). 8) Junior board members and ambassadors do not learn from one another/ there is mutual learning between junior board members and ambassadors resulted in a good rating ( $M = 7.81$ ,  $SD = 2.17$ ). Table 4.10 displays all statements that make up the mutual learning theme with their means and standard deviations.

**Table 4.10. Means and Standard Deviations for the items that measured Mutual Learning**

Item/Statement	Mean	SD
13.9 Youth and adults work separately on tasks/youth and adults work together on tasks.	6.62	2.33
14.9 Junior board members and ambassadors work separately on projects/junior board members and ambassadors work together on projects	6.44	2.63
14.11 Junior board members and ambassadors do not help one another learn new skills/junior board members and ambassadors frequently help one another learn new skills.	7.57	2.10
10.10 Junior board members do not help one another learn new skills/ junior board members help one another to learn new skills indicated a good rating.	7.57	2.10
11.10Ambassadors do not help one another learn new skills/ambassadors help one another learn new skills.	8.71	1.61
12.5 Adults do not learn from one another/adults learn from one another.	7.66	2.03
14.5 Junior board members provide no direction and mentoring for ambassadors/junior board members provide direction and mentoring to the ambassadors.	7.20	2.19
14.10 Junior board members and ambassadors do not learn from one another/ there is mutual learning between junior board members and ambassadors resulted in a good rating.	7.81	2.17
<b>Total</b>	<b>7.52</b>	<b>2.14</b>

*Note:* Rating is left to right, 1-2 very poor, 3-4 -poor, 5-6 fair, 7-8 good, 9-10 excellent. The negative statement is on the left and the positive statement is on the right.

## **Community Obligation**

Community obligation consisted of eight statements and yielded an average mean of 8.29 or good. These statements included 1) junior board members are not fully committed to their duties/junior board members are fully committed to their duties ( $M = 7.88$ ,  $SD = 1.74$ ) which indicated a good rating. The mean 7.88 ( $SD = 1.74$ ) for the statement 2) junior board members are not concerned with community change/junior board members are concerned with community

change resulted in a good rating. 3) Ambassadors are not committed to their duties/ambassadors are fully committed to their duties resulted in an average mean rating of 8.79, ( $SD = 1.27$ ). 4) Ambassadors are not concerned with community change/ ambassadors are concerned with community change ( $M = 7.37$ ,  $SD = 1.91$ ). 5) Adults have no interest in being involved with projects/adults are very excited about being involved with community change ( $M = 8.79$ ,  $SD = 1.34$ ). 6) Junior board members have little or no interest in being involved with community change/junior board members are very excited about their involvement with projects ( $M = 8.91$ ,  $SD = 1.13$ ). 7) Ambassadors have little or no interest in being involved with projects/ambassadors are very excited about their involvement with projects ( $M = 8.54$ ,  $SD = 1.76$ ). 8) Adults are not very concerned with community change/adults are very concerned with community change ( $M = 7.66$ ,  $SD = 2.23$ ). Table 4.11 identifies all items that are included in the community obligation topic.

**Table 4.11. Means and Standard Deviations for the items that measure Community Obligation**

Item/Statement	Mean	SD
10.11 Junior board members are not fully committed to their duties/junior board members are fully committed to their duties.	7.88	1.74
10.13 Junior board members are not concerned with community change/junior board members are concerned with community change resulted in a good rating.	7.88	1.74
11.11 Ambassadors are not committed to their duties/ambassadors are fully committed to their duties.	8.79	1.27
11.13 Ambassadors are not concerned with community change/ambassadors are concerned with community change.	7.37	1.91
12.8 Adults have no interest in being involved with projects/adults are very excited about being involved with community change.	8.79	1.34
10.12 Junior board members have little or no interest in being involved with community change/junior board members are very excited about their involvement with projects.	8.91	1.13
11.12 Ambassadors have little or no interest in being involved with projects/ambassadors are very excited about their involvement with projects.	8.54	1.76
12.9 Adults are not very concerned with community change/adults are very concerned with community change ( $M = 7.66$ , $SD = 2.23$ ).	7.66	2.23
Total	8.29	1.64

*Note:* Rating is left to right, 1-2 very poor, 3-4 -poor, 5-6 fair, 7-8 good, 9-10 excellent. The negative statement is on the left and the positive statement is on the right.

## **Adult Support**

The overall summated mean score for the topic of adult support was 8.08. Adult support included five statements 1) Adults tend to be followers of youth leadership/adults display a tendency to want to guide youth ( $M = 6.94$ ,  $SD = 2.62$ ). 2) Adults do not consult with youth on projects/adults actively and consistently consult with youth on projects and activities ( $M = 7.54$ ,

$SD = 1.86$ ). 3) Adults display a sense of wanting to control youth/adults display a willingness to accept and nurture youth ( $M = 8.83$ ,  $SD = 1.40$ ). 4) Adults never listen to the suggestions of the youth/adults almost always listen to the suggestions of the youth ( $M = 8.08$ ,  $SD = 1.89$ ). 5) Adults provide little or no direction and mentoring for youth/adults provide direction and mentoring for youth ( $M = 9.09$ ,  $SD = 1.14$ ). Statements for the topic of adult support are included in Table 4.12, along with the means and standard deviations for each item.

**Table 4.12. Means and Standard Deviations for the items that measure Adult Support**

Item/Statement	Mean	SD
12.2 Adults tend to be followers of youth leadership/adults display a tendency to want to guide youth.	6.94	2.62
13.4 Adults do not consult with youth on projects/adults actively and consistently consult with youth on projects and activities.	7.54	1.86
12.1 Adults display a sense of wanting to control youth/adults display a willingness to accept and nurture youth.	8.83	1.40
12.3 Adults never listen to the suggestions of the youth/adults almost always listen to the suggestions of the youth.	8.08	1.89
13.5 Adults provide little or no direction and mentoring for youth/adults provide direction and mentoring for youth.	9.09	1.14
Total	8.08	1.78

*Note:* Rating is left to right, 1-2 very poor, 3-4 -poor, 5-6 fair, 7-8 good, 9-10 excellent. The negative statement is on the left and the positive statement is on the right.

## Civility

The topic of civility included six statements with an overall summated mean score of 8.54. These statements included 1) Youth appear intimidated by adults/ youth seem comfortable working with adults ( $M = 7.91$ ,  $SD = 2.10$ ). 2) Junior board members appear intimidated by ambassadors/junior board members seem comfortable working with ambassadors ( $M = 9.11$ ,  $SD = 1.52$ ). 3) There is arguing and tension among youth and adults/ youth and adults get along

together ( $M = 8.57$ ,  $SD = 1.52$ ). 4) Adults appear afraid of youth/ adults seem comfortable working with youth ( $M = 8.91$ ,  $SD = 1.46$ ). 5) There is arguing/ tension among junior board and ambassadors/junior board and ambassadors get along well ( $M = 8.54$ ,  $SD = 1.40$ ). 6) Ambassadors seem comfortable working with board members/ambassadors appear afraid of the junior board members ( $M = 8.16$ ,  $SD = 2.06$ ). Table 4.13 displays the means and standard deviations of each statement for the Civility theme.

**Table 4.13. Means and Standard Deviations for the items that measure Civility.**

Item/Statement	Mean	SD
13.2 Youth appear intimidated by adults/ youth seem comfortable working with adults.	7.91	2.10
14.2 Junior board members appear intimidated by ambassadors/junior board members seem comfortable working with ambassadors.	9.11	1.52
13.1 There is arguing and tension among youth and adults/ youth and adults get along together.	8.57	1.52
13.3 Adults appear afraid of youth/ adults seem comfortable working with youth.	8.91	1.46
14.1 There is arguing/ tension among junior board an ambassadors/junior board and ambassadors get along well.	8.54	1.40
14.3 Ambassadors appear afraid of the junior board members/Ambassadors seem comfortable working with board members.	8.16	2.06
Total	7.80	1.89

*Note:* Rating is left to right, 1-2 very poor, 3-4 -poor, 5-6 fair, 7-8 good, 9-10 excellent. The negative statement is on the left and the positive statement is on the right.

## Mutual Respect

There were twelve items that comprised the mutual learning. The topic mutual learning consisted of an overall summated mean score of 7.80 or good. Statements regarding mutual respect included, youth are not at all considerate of adult opinions/youth are very considerate of

adult opinions (M = 8.05, SD = 1.67), youth do not trust adults to handle power responsibly/youth trust adults to handle power responsibly (M = 9.05, SD = 1.31). Junior board members do not consult with ambassadors on projects and activities/ junior board members actively and consistently consult with ambassadors on projects and activities (M = 6.22, SD = 2.55). In addition, statements that measured mutual respect also included, ambassadors are not at all considerate of junior board members opinions/ ambassadors are very considerate of junior board members opinions (M = 7.94, SD = 1.52). Junior board members do not trust ambassadors to handle power responsibly/junior board members trust ambassadors to handle power responsibly (M = 7.62, SD = 2.10). Adults always take over when working on projects and activities/ adults never take over when working on projects and activities (M = 6.66, SD = 2.15). Adults are not considerate of youth opinions/ adults are very considerate of youth opinions (M = 7.52, SD = 2.16). Youth and adults do not engage in respectful conversations/ youth and adults always engage in respectful conversations (M = 8.81, SD = 1.71), adults do not trust youth to handle power responsibly/ adults trust youth to handle power responsibly (M = 7.28, SD = 2.22). Junior board members are not at all considerate of ambassador opinions/ junior board members are very considerate of ambassador opinions (M= 8.86, SD = 1.29) and ambassadors do not trust junior board members to handle power responsibly/ ambassadors trust junior board members to handle power responsibly (M = 8.32, SD = 1.85). For a full list of items and their standard deviations please see Table 4.14 below.

**Table 4.14. Means and Standard Deviations for the items that measure Mutual Learning**

Item/Statement	Mean	SD
13.13 Youth are not at all considerate of adult opinions. Youth are very considerate of adult opinions.	8.05	1.67
13.15 Youth do not trust adults to handle power responsibly. Youth trust adults to handle power responsibly.	9.03	1.31

14.4 Junior board members do not consult with ambassadors on projects and activities/junior board members actively and consistently consult with ambassadors on projects and activities.	6.22	2.55
14.13 Ambassadors are not at all considerate of junior board members opinions/ Ambassadors are very considerate of junior board members opinions.	7.94	1.52
14.15 Junior board members do not trust ambassadors to handle power responsibly/junior board members trust ambassadors to handle power responsibly.	7.62	2.10
12.4 Adults always take over when working on projects and activities/ adults never take over when working on projects and activities.	6.66	2.15
13.12 Adults are not considerate of youth opinions/ adults are very considerate of youth opinions.	7.52	2.16
13.14 Youth/adults never engage in respectful conversations/ youth and adults always engage in respectful conversations.	8.81	1.71
13.16 Adults do not trust youth to handle power responsibly/ adults trust youth to handle power responsibly.	7.28	2.22
14.12. Junior board members are not at all considerate of ambassador opinions/junior board members are very considerate of ambassador opinions.	7.27	2.14
14.14 Junior board members and ambassadors never engage in respectful conversations/ junior board members and ambassadors almost always engage in respectful conversations.	8.86	1.29
14.16 Ambassadors do not trust junior board members to handle power responsibly/ ambassadors trust junior board members to handle power responsibly.	8.32	1.85
Total	7.80	1.88

*Note:* Rating is left to right, 1-2 very poor, 3-4 -poor, 5-6 fair, 7-8 good, 9-10 excellent. The negative statement is on the left and the positive statement is on the right.



## Statistical Significance

An ANOVA showed statistical significance when comparing the statement adults were very considerate of youth opinions by the type of respondent ( $F(4, 25.49) = 3.33, p = .029$ ).

Table 4.15 identifies the sum of squares, degrees of freedom, mean square,  $F$  statistic, and significance for the statement adults are not considerate of youth opinions/ adults are very considerate of youth opinions for previous junior board members and AHA volunteer leaders.

**Table 4.15. One-way ANOVA to Determine Equality of Means by previous junior board members and the AHA volunteers.**

	<i>SS</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Between	40.37	4	10.09	3.33	.029
Within	232.34	25.49	4.30		
Total	272.71	29.49			

*Note:* For the statement: Adults are very considerate of youth opinions/ Adults are not considerate of youth opinions.  
\* $p < .05$ .

A Tamhane T2 post hoc test was calculated to determine where the significant differences occurred. The Tamhane T2 post hoc test was utilized as there were unequal variances and it is a conservative measure (DeMuth, 2006). The Tamhane T2 post hoc test revealed a statistically significant difference between previous junior board members and adult volunteer leaders as well as previous junior board members and adult staff. Previous junior board members rated their perceptions lower ( $M = 6.44, SD = 2.17$ ) than adult volunteers and leaders ( $M = 8.60, SD = 1.26$ ) as indicated by the negative mean difference ( $MD = -2.15, SE = .65$ ) with a large effect size ( $\eta^2 = .18$ ) (Cohen, 1988). The Tamhane T2 post hoc test also revealed that previous junior board members rated their perceptions lower ( $M = 6.44, SD = 2.77$ ) than adult staff in the AHA ( $M = 8.44, SD = 1.01$ ) on their perceptions of the statement adults are very considerate of youth opinions, indicated by a negative mean difference ( $MD = -2.00, SE = .61$ ) with a large effect size ( $\eta^2 = .18$ ) (Cohen 1988). Table 4.16 identifies the mean difference and

significance for each variable. No significant differences were found between current junior board members ( $MD = -1.01, SE = 1.01$ ), and previous ambassadors ( $MD = -1.19, SE = .82$ ) on the statement adults are considerate of youth opinions adults are not considerate of youth opinions.

**Table 4.16. Tamhane Post Hoc Multiple Comparison based on the statement Adults are very considerate of youth opinions/ Adults are not considerate of youth opinion.**

	Previous Junior Board Member	Previous Ambassador	Current Junior Board Member	Adult Volunteer Leader	Adult Staff
Previous Junior Board Member	0	-1.19	-1.01	-2.15*	-2.00*
Previous Ambassador		0	.18	-.96	-.81
Current Junior Board Member			0	1.14	-.99
Adult Volunteer Leader				0	.15
Adult Staff					0

Note. \*  $p < .05$ .

An ANOVA also revealed a statistically significant difference when comparing the statement youth and adults engage in respectful conversations by type of respondent  $F(4, 54) = 5.35, p = .003$ . Table 4.17 identifies the sum of squares, degrees of freedom, mean square,  $F$  statistic, and significance for the statement youth and adults do not engage in respectful conversations/youth and adults engage in respectful conversations by previous junior board members, current junior board members, and adult volunteer leaders.

**Table 4.17. One-way ANOVA to Determine Equality of Means by Previous and Current Junior Board Members and Adult Volunteer Leaders.**

	<i>SS</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Between	19.96	4	4.99	5.35	.003
Within	150.98	54	2.76		
Total	170.95	58	2.95		

Note: For the statement, youth and adults engage in respectful conversations. \*  $p < .05$ .

A Tamhane T2 post hoc test was used to determine where the significant differences occurred. The Tamhane T2 post hoc test was used because there were unequal variances and the Tamhane T2 post hoc is a conservative measure (DeMuth, 2006). The Tamhane T2 post hoc test

revealed statistically significant differences between current junior board members, previous junior board members and adult volunteers on their perceptions of the statement youth engage in respectful conversations. Current junior board members rated their perceptions of youth and adults engage in respectful conversations higher ( $M = 9.81$ ,  $SD = .404$ ) than previous junior board members ( $M = 9.18$ ,  $SD = 1.07$ ). The positive mean difference of 1.54 indicated a medium to large effect size ( $\eta^2 = .117$ ). The Tamhane T2 post hoc test also revealed that current junior board members rated themselves higher ( $M = 9.81$ ,  $SD = .404$ ) than adult volunteers ( $M = 8.70$ ,  $SD = .948$ ) on their perceptions of youth and adults engage in respectful conversations which indicated a positive mean difference of 1.11 with a medium to large effect size ( $\eta^2 = .117$ ). (See Table 4.18).

The Tamhane T2 post hoc test revealed no significant differences between previous ambassadors ( $MD = .64$ ,  $SE = .35$ ), and adult staff ( $MD = 1.48$ ,  $SD = .95$ ) on the statement youth and adults engage in respectful conversations/ youth and adults do not engage in respectful conversations.

**Table 4.18. Tamhane Post Hoc Comparison based on the statement Youth and Adults engage in respectful conversations/ Youth and Adults do not engage in respectful conversations.**

	Previous Junior Board Member	Previous Ambassador	Current Junior Board Member	Adult Volunteer Leader	Adult Staff
Previous Junior Board Member	0	-.90	-1.54*	-.42	-.05
Previous Ambassador		0	-.64	.48	.85
Current Junior Board Member			0	1.11*	1.48
Adult Volunteer Leader				0	.36
Adult Staff					0

Note \* $p < .05$ .

A one-way ANOVA revealed statistically significant differences when comparing the statement youth make their own decisions/youth rely on the adults to make their own decisions ( $F(4,54) = 3.12, p < .022$ ). Table 4.19 identifies the sum of squares, degrees of freedom, mean square,  $F$  statistic, and significance for the statement youth make their own decisions/youth rely on adults to make their decisions by previous ambassadors and current junior board members.

**Table 4.19. One-way ANOVA to Determine Equality of Means by Previous Ambassadors and Current Junior Board Members.**

	<i>SS</i>	<i>Df</i>	<i>MS</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Between	43.35	4	10.83	3.12	.02
Within	187.23	54	3.46		
Total	230.57	58	3.97		

Note: For the statement, youth rely on adults when making decisions/ youth make their own decisions. \* $p < .05$ .

Since equal variances were assumed and the Levene's test was not significant a Tukey post hoc test was calculated to determine statistical differences between variables (McHugh,

2011). A Tukey post hoc test is used as a conservative measure to reduce the probability of a Type I error (McHugh, 2011).

The Tukey Post hoc test revealed that previous ambassadors rated themselves lower ( $M = 4.36$ ,  $SD = 1.63$ ) than current junior board members ( $M = 6.73$ ,  $SD = 1.74$ ) on their perceptions of youth rely on adults when making decisions/ youth make decisions themselves. A negative mean difference ( $MD = -2.36$ ) indicated that the previous ambassadors rated their perceptions of youth make decisions on their own lower than current junior board members with a large effect size ( $\eta^2 = .188$ ). (See Table 4.20). The Tukey post hoc test revealed no significant differences for previous junior board members ( $MD = -1.97$ ,  $SD = .71$ ), adult volunteers ( $MD = -2.13$ ,  $SD = .81$ ) and adult staff ( $MD = -.97$ ,  $SD = .84$ ).

**Table 4.20. Tamhane Post hoc Comparison based on the statement Adults make decisions for Youth/ Youth make their own decisions.**

	Previous Junior Board Member	Previous Ambassador	Current Junior Board Member	Adult Volunteer Leader	Adult Staff
Previous Junior Board Member	0	1.97	-.39	-.16	1.00
Previous Ambassador		0	-2.36*	-2.13	-.97
Current Junior Board Member			0	.22	1.39
Adult Volunteer Leader				0	1.16
Adult Staff					0

Note.  $p < .05$

## **Qualitative Results**

### **Profile of the Participants**

Of the 12 interviews that were conducted eight were selected to be reported within this research because saturation was reached, in addition these eight interviews were deep and rich with content. The eight interviews consisted of three adults who were volunteer leaders, three current junior board members or previous junior board members and two previous ambassadors. The volunteer leaders and the junior board members had been in their leadership positions for at least two years and the previous ambassadors had served in their role at some point from the year 2019-2022. Of the participants, two were male and six were female. To protect the identity of the participants the exact years of serving on the junior board, and years of leadership by both adults and youth will not be revealed in this research. The adults participating include George (adult volunteer), Jane (adult volunteer), and Jill (adult volunteer). The youth participants include Tim (current junior board member), Lara (previous junior board member), Cora (previous junior board member), Rachel (previous ambassador), and Alice (previous ambassador).

### **Research Question One- Interactions**

#### **Youth Perceptions of Interactions**

##### ***Youth Voice***

The first research question sought to describe the perceptions of youth and adult interactions by those in youth leadership positions and the adult leaders of a trade industry organization this being the American Hereford Association (AHA). Youth perceptions of the youth and adult interactions are described first and then adult perceptions. Upon transcript analysis, the theme Interaction revealed the most about their perceptions while working with each other. Interaction was described as youth and adults working together in meetings or

projects to achieve a common goal, this also included individuals communicating with each other to help develop skills or acquire skills needed for the leadership position. The theme Interaction contained subthemes that answered objective one, these included, youth voice and mutual respect.

Youth voice referred to youth having the opportunity to share ideas or concerns about issues or ideas and how they felt when their ideas were or were not used on projects or tasks. Junior board members overall felt that their voice was heard during an interaction with adult volunteers and staff within the association and were able to express their ideas, interests, and thoughts. Lara, previous junior board member, felt that “all of the adults were receptive to our ideas [as junior board members].” She explained why she felt this way and said “we would sit down at a conference table and [...] spit balled and brainstormed [changes and] they (adult) might insert [...] an opinion here or there based on logistical stuff, [or] appropriateness for age wise type stuff.”

From the junior board perspective, youth voice was heard specifically during meetings. From the ambassador standpoint many felt that their voices were not used as much during the Junior National Hereford Expo but were given the opportunity to express their concerns at the end of the internship experience as Alice, previous ambassador, said,

The adults would tell us hold on to what you like and what you don't like about this internship experience, and we will have a meeting and talk about it [...] and literally the adults sat down with us for at least two hours to [...] um talk about it [...] like what should we do differently next year, what should we keep the same.

She adds that she felt great about getting the opportunity to voice her concerns where they discussed everything about the job, and what the association could do differently with the



internship. With her experiences, she felt the adult valued the opinions of the youth. However, some felt that their voices were heard from the adults, Cora, previous junior board member, indicated her feelings about sharing her thoughts and said, “I was more disappointed when an adult would reject my ideas rather than a peer as it was almost always more reassuring from the peer.” She followed by saying that “a peer was one of the team.” It was almost like she knew that if a peer did not like her ideas, then it more than likely was not best for the team or the event. Although some individuals did not have as great of an experience with their peers and expressing their voices Rachel, previous ambassador, shared about her thoughts of voicing her opinion while at the event, “when your voice was not heard, it made you feel unappreciative and looked over like no one cared about you.” Alice, previous ambassador shared, “I felt like my opinions and ideas did not matter to them [other youth leaders], but it was accepted by the adult.”

### ***Mutual Respect***

The subtheme of mutual respect represented statements in which youth indicated being valued and respected by both adults and youth. Not only the relationship between adults and youth but also youth to youth within their role. Mutual respect also referenced how youth were considerate of each other’s opinions and how they valued their own opinions verses their peers. From the youths’ experiences several commented about the clarification of youth roles while in their leadership positions. “I don’t feel we were ever given the perspective of what the ambassador’s role was supposed to be” Cora, previous junior board member said. She later adds, “the only time that we ever got to interact with them (ambassadors) was at junior nationals.” Seeing that the junior board and the ambassadors did not interact as much, Cora indicated that “from time to time there could be some push and show between the two because neither group was given a clear picture of how they were supposed to interact with the other.”

During the conversation she expressed why she felt this way, she indicated that the junior board member would provide directions for the ambassador and the ambassador would feel that the junior board member was not in charge of them, which, she said “is totally fair, [...] I don’t think it was ever clarified for us what the relationships was supposed to look like”, she continued, “I think whenever there is a lack of clarity it can be really difficult to build healthy relationships on a team.” She feels that it is not just who’s in charge but how the roles are organized.

To expand on Cora’s opinions of youth leaders, previous ambassadors, Alice and Rachel, indicated that in their experiences, there was no real crossover between the two groups, and they were more ‘separated.’ Alice further expresses her opinions of how she experienced her role and the interaction with the junior board:

I didn’t really see a lot of crossovers with the junior board and the ambassadors, um I thought they were very separated like there wasn’t even a day like where we even got to introduce ourselves to the junior board [...] if we didn’t go out of our way to introduce ourselves, there really was not any way for us to build that camaraderie.

The separation of the roles was also clarified by Rachel who indicated that she did not have experience working with the junior board while serving as an ambassador. Her reasoning was indicated in the following statement, “I guess being involved with the Hereford Association now, I can see that the junior board works more with the junior activities director and not so much you know the intern and the ambassadors.”

Regarding her experiences working with the junior board Alice, previous ambassador, mentioned, “they (junior board) kind of just spoke to me like, like I didn’t know what I was

talking about” when offering advice or ideas about how to improve a task. When speaking to the junior board Alice felt as if she did not matter and that they did not respect her as a person.

While mutual respect was hard to achieve for both youth leaders, some youth felt that mutual respect between youth and adults was also dismissed from time to time. Cora, previous junior board member, indicated that “there was push and shove between youth and adults from time to time, um, I think some of the difficulty that caused that to arise is we [junior board] had one understanding of what the adult’s role was and what they actually did.” She added, “the adult was doing more of the role of the junior board, since the junior board was not doing what they were supposed to.” However, she felt that as time passed, the dynamics of the group (junior board) shifted and they were doing more, and the adults guided the youth more. She stated the reasoning as follows:

There was also a little bit of push and shove between adult volunteers and the junior board because I think with the youth there is some natural you know wanting to try new things [...], and from time to time the older generation is like hold up, I do not want to go that way that fast.

### **Adult Perceptions of Interactions**

#### ***Youth Voice***

Youth voice was a subtheme that defined adult perceptions of their interactions. Youth voice included having the opportunity to share concerns or express their opinions to issues or ideas. All adults agreed that youth voice was always heard, and that youth voice was an important factor in the association. Jill, adult volunteer, sums up the overall thoughts on youth voice when she claimed that “everybody’s voice is heard” and indicated that “I don’t think that uh they [adults] listen to someone over any more than they do over someone else.”

From her perspective of youth voice, she further adds “I really don’t think that these kids think that they took someone else’s suggestion and not mine, I think these kids are mature enough.” She expresses that with their maturity she knows that everyone can express their voices and describes this well when asked about youths’ opinions and voices within a meeting:

They [the youth] understand that sometimes we can share ideas, they might not get taken but it’s ok, it doesn’t mean that what you said wasn’t good or we didn’t listen to you, um with the NJHA board uh especially with the AHA staff when our kids voice and share their opinions they’re heard, and they know they are.

Jill explained that youths’ voices are heard when they have an idea for a contest, or when they want to select judges for the following year. Additionally, she added, “sometimes youth will have a suggestion to improve a contest midway through the year and present it at a meeting and it might get used or it might not, but they know that they expressed their ideas.” While on the topic of youth voice George agrees “folks need to have their voice encouraged to be shared, so I think it is highly important.” When asked how he feels young people’s voices are being heard he indicated that through the various opportunities that are provided for the youth this includes at the junior board meetings where they can voice their opinions, or the contests. George says, “we create a lot of opportunities for youth to be heard, [through] contests that have nothing to do with the show or um, [...] a career fair [...] where they actually talk with industry leaders, so voice matters.” He later added, “adults should encourage it (youth voice).” Overall adults felt like they did provide youth with the ability to bring their voices to the table and share ideas which means that youth voice is expressed in the AHA.

### ***Mutual Respect***

Mutual respect was a subtheme that was discovered from the analysis of the adult perceptions of their interactions with youth. Mutual respect was described as youth and adults valuing and being considerate of each other's opinions while in an interaction. Mutual respect also meant that both youth and adults would respect and value each other while they are interacting. Overall adults felt that the interactions with young people were great, and that they can really learn a lot from the youth about their experiences and leadership that they have. Jill, adult volunteer, says, "one of the nice things about working with the youth is their energy, passion, [...] I've never met a group of kids that are fun to be around."

In relation to her interaction with the youth leaders within the Hereford Association, Jill indicated that "it's just really refreshing to get to work with them you know and see their growth." George, an adult volunteer, was similar in his thinking of mutual respect as he talked about his interactions with the youth and how they learn best from their experiences. He states, "they keep you alive, they have a ton of energy, and um they give you a look back at what life was like when you were that age." As George was reminiscing about his experiences growing up, he also indicated similar thoughts as Jill when working and interacting with the youth "I like the fact that they bring a different perspective or point of view to the table, we can learn from that; we can" he said. When discussing how to interact with youth about their growth, George says,

We [the Hereford organization] give a lot of opportunities to celebrate youth, um but we also, I think we do more than just celebrate the winners, um, we try our best to celebrate the journey and I do think that is important.

Regarding interacting with youth, he claims that “I will say that if we ever have to criticize somebody, or we have to correct or enforce a rule, or something like that, that is always done in private, criticize in private and congratulate in public.” When interacting with youth, he also indicated that “when you interact with individuals remembering something about them is important as individuals will feel valued and respected”, he adds “it matters when you make people feel welcomed and that they are appreciated.”

## **Research Question Two- Experiences**

The second research question was to describe the experiences of youth and adult leaders in a leadership role within the American Hereford Association. The youth experiences are described first and then the adult experiences will be described. The theme experiences were comprised of three subthemes this included, community obligation, youth responsibility, and mutual learning.

### **Youth Experiences**

#### ***Community Obligation***

The subtheme community obligation represented statements that related to the youths' experience which indicated that they have an interest in and a commitment to helping the community improve, the community of the American Hereford Association. Several statements from the youth indicated that within their experiences they were helping the community. The leadership experiences that they had within their role were positive and they believed they were doing things for the youth. This was further explained by Cora, previous junior board member, who summed up the experiences on community obligation well when she said, “every adult that I encountered [...] was for, um the youth for our junior board as a group, they believed in what we were doing they believed in us,”

While believing in the young people and what the Hereford Association does, many youth leaders felt that positive interactions would build the association as a whole and the organization itself. Building the community and building positive interactions was something that Tim, current junior board member, was very keen on when he discussed youth and their leadership “just kind of like I just mentioned at these Faces of Leadership or these different conferences, [...] we’re building the youth of America, and [...] I think that the younger generation even younger than myself is the future of tomorrow” he further adds:

I think the association is headed in the direction that we are preparing our youth for tomorrow [...] and I think that’s a huge part of this because you know when we’re all long gone, they’re gonna be the ones that are running the beef industry.

As a current junior board member, Tim had great points in building the community or the Hereford Association, he understood that the youth are the ones that are learning the skills and building the future of the breed. For some youth, their leadership is passed on from other family members and those that have previously had passions for the breed. Cora shared her thoughts on the Hereford Association, “the Hereford Association is truly a family, they create a family atmosphere, [...] and bring your family into the ag atmosphere” she further adds “I think, um, that’s probably the most powerful thing that they do is focus on family because when you do that you bring in multiple ages of people into the fold”.

While thinking about what is best for the community as a whole and their experiences within it, as a current junior board member, Tim sums this up best when he states, “the Hereford Association creates an atmosphere of learning and growth while focusing on the young people, I believe in the future of the breed association.” Alice, previous ambassador, concludes by saying “AHA is very good at creating programs, making funds available, and executing opportunities

for the youth.” Through their experiences in enhancing the community, youth felt that what the Hereford Association was doing was very conducive in allowing youth to learn skills and leadership for their future.

### ***Mutual Learning***

Mutual learning was a subtheme developed from the experience theme. Mutual learning indicates that youth and adults learn together in their roles and help each other develop skills. Additionally mutual learning also means that youth were able to work with their teammates and develop respect for each other and their own experiences individually. Many young people indicated that they learned several leadership skills during their experiences which included interacting with youth, and how to work with like-minded individuals on a team. As a current junior board member, Tim stated “when youth are communicating with each other while at conferences we and they [the members] develop the soft skills.” He adds, “at our BOLD conference we discussed seven ways to start a conversation with any random person.”

Several other youth leaders such as Lara, previous junior board member, shared her experiences while serving and claimed “we learned how to communicate with others that may not usually strike up a conversation which helped us to bring everyone together in a training, at a conference or at junior nationals.” She provided an example of an experience with a young person and striking up a conversation with them and stated “just something as simple as that, kind of brings them into the mix and I think it creates positive experience they will remember” She concluded by saying, “the more you can get them involved and the more they feel welcome the more likely they will stay um as part of that family and want to be involved and learn along with you.”



Cora expressed her experiences while serving on the team and stated that “everyone was willing to jump on board and do what was needed to be done to move the association, move our organization in the direction that we wanted to see, which required learning.” She further continued

Working as a team showed me the diversity of what leadership looks like, it is not always the person out in front um making the big decisions or saying you know this is the direction we are gonna go or um managing a group, often times it is the people that are getting behind you and saying, you know we believe in what you are doing, or we believe in this whole organization, and we want to jump on board um and do the work and do the leg work and do all the things that need to be done in order to make it happen.

With her experiences serving as a previous junior board member, Cora indicated that “it was really cool to watch what the group was able to accomplish overtime as that mind shift kind of shifted from like a self-centered mindset to a group centered mindset of what we want to accomplish together.” She later added “If I learned anything from the junior board that was what I learned, is like how powerful those two different mindsets can be, because one is incredibly detrimental and the other is incredibly useful, um and powerful.” From her experiences she found that as teams work together, they can accomplish anything and “that’s what I observed” she said.

Learning what real leadership looked like was a great experience for most as they learned with their teammates as Lara, previous junior board member, points out “I learned so much about leadership and what it looks like, it was just a great experience.” The youth leaders in the AHA specifically indicated that learning was almost always taking place because of their experiences with other youth and adults within the association.

## **Adult Experiences**

### ***Youth Responsibilities***

Youth responsibilities was a subtheme that was developed from the experience theme.

Youth responsibilities indicated that youth were responsible to carry out task and duties and taking the initiative to complete the task. Experiences represented what adults felt that their experiences were of working with the youth and their responsibilities during their time at junior nationals and throughout the year.

All the adults believed that their experiences with the youth leaders were great and that they were able to fulfill their roles while serving in the leadership position. As an adult volunteer, George indicated “the work that they do is tremendous and the working relationship between the youth and the adult is great.” Jill, adult volunteer, identified that in her experiences with working with the ambassadors “they provide such a great service uh at the National Junior Hereford Expo, just all the work that they put in and helping uh the staff throughout the week, so we are very appreciative of uh what we’ve seen them do and will continue to do.” She believes that with the ambassador team it is great to have more hands, she adds “some groups of ambassadors are better than others.” As an adult leader the experiences with the ambassadors have been great and she believes that when youth do not need to be handheld and they are able to take off with a task, no one needs to worry if the task will get done. She believes that every task that is asked of the ambassadors, “ambassadors complete and do it well, doing something and doing it well help to make the best experiences for all.” She further concludes that in spending time with not only the ambassadors but the junior board, it allows for great experiences to happen “and we get to know them on a deeper level.” From Jane’s perspective, she believes that “youth recognize how to solve our adult problems because they are the ones that are living in it” meaning that the

Hereford organization is a youth organization and the youth know what is best for the youth while in their leadership roles.

Jane also indicated that her experiences working with the junior board has been great, she stated that she has participated in several meetings and was able to go to the BOLD conference and experience what the junior board leadership role was and interact with them. She continued, “I have worked with the junior board when we have facilitated contests and have participated in several meetings and regular conference calls and Zooms [and] the fed steer shootout program.” Her experiences with the youth role have been positive and she feels that even at junior nationals she has worked with the ambassadors when she needed something. Much like Jill’s experience Jane feels that “no matter where they are or what they are doing youth seem to always pitch in and help and that is all that we can ask of the youth within the organization.”

The adults also felt that the youth were accountable in their role, and were responsible for certain tasks, one of these tasks is for the youth to select the judges for the junior national Hereford Expo, “they select judges for the junior nationals and are accountable to their selections, uh which I think is uh just recently happened in the last few years to my knowledge,” George said. In reference to selecting judges Jill has had experiences with other adult members who have indicated that they really want to see the junior board select the judges for the Junior National, Jill indicates from this experience “it was just one of those things that in judges selection, there are a lot of breeders who want the junior members to have as much say as they possibly can in selecting judges for the junior shows”, she later adds, “that’s something that’s really big to the members.”

In referencing youth responsibilities, as an adult, George added, “the best way to learn is to make your own decisions and be accountable for it”, Additionally he believes “if things go

wrong, you try and fix them, you address them and the best way to do that is if we turn that role back to the juniors, so I think the work with the juniors is tremendous.”

### ***Mutual Learning***

The subtheme of mutual learning indicated that youth and adults learn together and value each other’s opinions and ideas. While adults worked with youth, several of the adults commented about how they are building youth for the future. As George indicated from his experiences working with youth:

They are leaders, um they, they excel now they do a lot of that on their own, but because we create the framework for them to have an opportunity to be successful, and then they become awarded from the adult through scholarship, leadership, or future careers.

As adults work with the youth, they create the opportunity for them to learn from their leadership positions and then take what they learn and bring it to their future careers and positions that they serve. It is important as George mentioned, “the adult is there to help them build the foundation and create the opportunity so they can learn together.”

Jane shared her perspective on her experiences working with youth, “I’m a firm believer that kids need to find their own path” she said, “but they do not always know their own path so, it is good to have the adults that have the same passions, or similar wants [...] they can help them along and push them that direction.” She continued, “I’m a firm believer that we don’t do the work for them, I think they have to do the work.” She believes that adults should not do the work for the youth but allow them to grow and learn and not be a ‘dictatorship’. She suggested, “it (the relationship) should be what are your ideas, does that make sense you know, kind of go through the mental process with them” she said, “let them grow and learn while in the process of leading.”

Together as a learning process, Jane believes that adults can really learn while working with youth. She gave an example of an individual that was preparing a speech. She said in reference to preparing the youth for the contest, I ask questions like “how are you going to say that better? how can you word that better?” In asking youth to rephrase or resay something she feels she is giving the youth support in which they learn from, but she also learns how to work with the youth. In reference to working with youth, Jane indicated, “[sometimes] you gotta be a bit tender, with your response, you don’t want them to completely just shut down, right?”, she continued, “so, I think some of that is personality, um how kids will react to that, and I see that every day in my role anyway”.

From his perspective as an adult, George alluded to this when he discussed working with young people, he said when they say “well, you don’t understand me, that statement means you are not hearing me, you’re not taking the time to appreciate my feelings or what I’m going through.” Through this statement, George knows that he may have to adjust or reiterate what the young person said to him so that they feel he understands. Jane also demonstrates how she has learned not only about someone’s personality but also how to interact with youth she says, “so I think my personal growth has been, recognize that you can’t be bulldozer, especially with kids,” she continues “you can’t just instantly say no bad idea, were doing it like this, right?” As the youth represent the junior members sometimes the adults can learn a lot from them, especially in the leadership positions. She further indicated that “the young people know how to fix the issues and we can learn a lot from them, since they are the ones that are doing it and engaging with the members and the adults within the association.”

George provided a great example where he helped a youth learn how to prepare her heifer for a show and she excelled with that animal and became successful because of what he taught

her. Through his experiences, he also learned how to teach youth. While some adults indicated there was a lot of growth and learning overtime for themselves personally, there was also a lot of growth and learning that happened as a whole group between the youth and the adults. George provided one example of when he learned along with the youth, he said “we (both youth and adults) learned how to proceed through changes that were needed for a [...] process and learned committee responsibilities.” He continued, “that was a hard lesson, but because of it, I think the process we have now, is a good process which gives responsibility and accountability to each group (youth and adults).” During this experience, George learned, that “it was a bad process, so you know for me, it was also more than just helping the juniors out, it helped me as an adult [...] to learn and it was not comfortable, but it was necessary.”

### **Research Question Three- Expectations**

The third research question was to determine youth and adult leaders’ expectations of each other when in leadership positions. The youth expectations of the adults are described first followed by the adult expectations of the youth. The theme expectation revealed expectations for both youth and adults. The subthemes that resulted included, youth responsibility and adult support.

#### **Youth Expectations**

##### ***Youth Responsibilities***

Youth responsibility indicated that young people are carrying out tasks and taking the initiative to complete the tasks. Youth responsibility meant that young people knew what was expected of them and that they felt they were carrying out the responsibilities of the job. Several youths indicated that everyone had their own jobs that was scheduled out whether that was helping with a contest or a project at junior nationals. Junior board members said they were

expected or ‘encouraged’ to visit with as many people as possible. As a previous junior board member, Cora shared her expectations of the junior board role, when she said, “I knew that my job um was to be accessible um to be somebody that they [junior members] could go to, if I’m supposed to represent then I should be talking to as much people as possible.” Alice a previous ambassador, further enhanced Cora’s thoughts by sharing the following regarding junior board expectations. “The junior board members are the ones that are directly involved with the youth. They facilitate contests, work the ring, they’re the ones going out and talking to kids and being that leadership face of the Hereford Association” she said. Lara, previous junior board member, had similar thoughts and shared her expectations of the junior board by stating:

We are tasked with um assisting our advisors and our staff members with putting on and facilitating the national junior Hereford Expo as well as other leadership and educational um contests and opportunities such as faces of leadership, um and state field days.

From a youth’s perspective on the ambassador role, Tim, a current junior board member, indicated the following, well um, they (the ambassador) are a huge help to the junior board members [...] it’s almost like having an extension of the junior board to a point”, he added “I mean they help out more ways than one [...]from setting up to tearing down to just kind of being there you know for help of any sort.”

In speaking of the Junior National Hereford Expo, Tim described his expectations and the responsibilities of youth leaders as helping each other and later added “it is really nice to have that extra set of hands-on deck you know especially at junior nationals.” According to Alice, a previous ambassador, she defined her leadership role as an ‘event coordinator’ as she felt a lot of the behind-the-scenes work was what she expected to do along with her peers. As a previous ambassador, Rachel also indicated regarding the expectation of her position, “you have to go

where they need you, and sometimes you are just sitting in an office [...] as I worked the office answering questions and helping people with various things throughout the week.”

Additionally, Cora, previous junior board member, said of all youth leadership roles, “we (junior board members) are responsible for making the difference in other people’s lives and it is essential that both junior board members and ambassadors help each other with the tasks at hand.” Tim says about his leadership role as a current junior board member, “we are always looked up to from younger members.” Lara, previous junior board member, shared the following about the expectations of the junior board role she said, “you learn as you go from one year to the next and you figure it out as your perceptions and knowledge of the role changes.” As a previous junior board member, Cora also indicated that while individuals are executing, learning and growing, “their (junior board) role is responsible for upholding the entire organization even when there is a short amount of time like the ambassador experience.

### ***Adult Support***

The last subtheme under youth experiences was adult support. This subtheme was defined as adults being positive role models for youth and their willingness to accept and nurture youth. There were mixed feelings about the expectation of adult support during their leadership role. While discussing the expectation that youth had with adults Lara, a previous junior board member indicated, “their role was to guide us junior members into what needed to be done and how to accomplish those goals”, she further explained that the adults did this through “shooting us a text, reminding us to write our articles for our newsletter.”

According to Tim as a current junior board member, his expectations of the adult was to “mentor, advise from time to time and be someone to look up to.” While visiting with Tim he



believed that the adults did follow through with their role of being that mentor or guide by stating the following.

If I've ever got a question, I can call one of the advisors and ask them their thoughts, and they kind of you know, maybe I don't get that answer that I am looking for but it may um you know if I don't get that answer that I'm looking for [...] you know it points me in the right direction of where I need to go or where I need to be looking.

As youth expected the adults to be the mentor from time to time, Alice a previous ambassador, said regarding her experiences with adults, "I loved working for the association because of the people that worked there, um, they made me feel so valued and they still do to this day, like I cannot like talk about that enough." She adds, "staff make a note to say hello since you are part of the family always." Youth expected the adults to make them feel valued and appreciated when in their leadership role, and when the adult did not make them feel appreciated or have the time for them, the youth realized that there was always someone to provide the adult support even if it was someone their same age. When describing her support from the adult, Rachel, a previous ambassador, said:

The interaction between adults and youth was always positive and when we did not know an answer while working the office, we could call on the intern or adult staff who would help or find the person that could help answer the question.

Additionally, as some ambassadors did have the adult support they expected, some junior board members felt that favoritism was shown by adults. As a previous junior board member, Cora indicated the following "I would be amiss, if I honestly didn't say there was some favoritism", she adds about her experiences working with adults, "I think from time to time uh there were a couple of adults who managed the junior board members poorly or treated them

poorly.” Through their communication with adults, young people had the same expectations for the adult role and expected to be treated the same and that the adult should guide, mentor, and be the support system.

### **Adult Expectations**

#### ***Youth Responsibility***

The subtheme youth responsibility indicated how young people are accepting and carrying out tasks and duties while in their leadership role. Specifically, how adults expected youth to carry out their role while in the leadership position. All the adults viewed the youth leadership role in which the youth should be a “doer, role model, leader, and treat the leadership position like a job” stated George. The adults expected the youth to be responsible, accountable and fix their mistakes if something would occur. Jill an adult volunteer, shared her expectations of youth by stating the following. “I think one of the big expectations is you want these young people to grow and become better leaders [and] it’s nice to watch those board members you know reach their goals [...] and become you know better individuals.” Regarding the youth leadership position, Jill indicated, “you expect them to take on responsibility, and I think they all do it to a varying degree, some do it better than others,” she adds.

As an adult, George shared his expectations of the junior board and youth leadership roles, “it’s a working board (junior board) it is not a position.” While discussing the responsibilities of the junior board to carry out tasks, George further added “the junior boards role is to do the heavy lifting, not only with fundraising but the organization” he said.

When referencing youth leadership positions, as an adult volunteer, Jane says, “you really want them to be good leaders, and role models for the younger generation.” Jill an adult volunteer, says, “younger kids look up to the older youth, and especially [those wearing] the

maroon jackets, which inspire the kids to run on the board because they know that their voices will be heard.” Adults also feel that youth need to be “energetic, keep the vibe going and be the best they can be” (Jill). This also goes for the ambassadors not just the junior board. Adults expect the ambassadors to be “the workforce that keeps the association moving forward, it is a huge role” (George). The conversation with George regarding the ambassador role was pertinent to responsibilities within the Hereford Organization.

Um the Ambassadors are all just pretty much part of the Hereford family and so I do not know, there is no big sign or label or target on the ambassador’s shirt or back. They are just pitching in and putting their shoulder to the wheel, um the boulder like everyone else.

He demonstrated that he felt no different about the expectations of the junior board as compared to the ambassador role and indicated he does believe that “with the ambassador’s role, we try and create people that have a deeper appreciation for the Hereford breed.” While adults have similar expectations for both the junior board and the ambassadors, all adults agree that youth should learn from the opportunities that are presented before them.

### *Adult support*

The last subtheme that represented expectations was adult support. Adult support indicated the role that adults believe they should demonstrate for the youth. Many adults viewed themselves as the coach, the supportive mentor, allowing youth to grow in their position from their mistakes and offer guidance. Similar, to what the youth expected them to be the adults agreed was their role. As an adult, George shared how he feels about the role of the adult:

You know I think for sure, it’s to be supportive, um, to be encouraging, to coach, um to show empathy, but also um allow the youth to make mistakes and learn from them or celebrate in their positive decisions that they do.

He also added regarding the adult role, “um, I think that we [...] as adults have the responsibility to inform the membership, the senior membership but also the youth membership, the junior membership of the opportunities and the potential by being involved in the organization.” He shared an example which indicated how the adult organizations within the AHA have given out several scholarships and awards which allows for youth membership to grow because they realize that there are several opportunities presented.

As there are several opportunities to be a part of the breed, the adults also expect themselves to be honest and transparent, which adds to the definition of their role. Jane shared of her perspective of the adult role as the following, “just mentor, um to have the best intentions to push that kid down the right path, be there if they have any questions, concerns um to be their kind of as a foundation.” Jane believes that when the adult understands and does not expect the youth to know everything, they can then help them build their foundation and understanding. It was crucial to hear her thoughts about what she expects of the adult role, she claims that “parents maybe do not think that the youth can do a task, but then other adults’ step in and help the youth along and build their foundation.”

According to Jane, an adult volunteer, “adults should listen and show the youth that they care.” George shared the following about his expectation of the adult and indicated that.

The adult should inform the members of the opportunities which will allow the association to grow, and it is important that not just youth within the association are given the opportunities but others outside of the organization become aware of the opportunities as well.

While informing the members, youth leaders, and the association of the opportunities, Jane indicated the importance of the adult role and said, “it is important to recognize youth and be intentional and grateful for what they bring to the relationship.”

#### **Research Question Four- Knowledge**

The fourth research question was to determine the knowledge of Youth Development by both youth and adult leaders within the American Hereford Association. Knowledge of youth development is described first by the youth, followed by the adults. The knowledge theme revealed participants knowledge of PYD and their thoughts on a training for PYD.

##### **Youth Knowledge**

##### ***Building the Future of Youth***

Building the future of youth was a subtheme that represented the knowledge that young people had on youth development. Some youth had not heard of the concept of positive youth development and other youth indicated their thoughts of ‘growing the future generations through engagement’ (Lara), positive interactions (Tim) and developing skills in yourself (Alice). Alice, a previous ambassador, shared her thoughts on positive youth development by saying “positive youth development is developing yourself as a person and teaching yourself skills and growing the next generation of people.” Both junior board members and ambassadors felt they had heard of positive youth development and stated that positive youth development was ‘making a good impact and the encouragement of others’ (Lara). However, Rachel, a previous ambassador, shared the following regarding positive youth development which summed up youth thoughts:

I think just helping kids see their value and following their passions and um just creating adults that are mindful and wanting to be good role models as they get older. Um I think

that all contributes to positive youth development and yea just helping kids be the best people they can be.

For youth, many saw positive youth development as the way young people were treated but they did not express their idea of how to treat the young people other than previous junior board member, Cora, as she thoughtfully packaged her answer, she said the following about positive youth development, “okay, so um I think positive youth development has to do with how you probably approach youth in their development process. Um but I would imagine um that comes with your relationship building, and the treatment of youth.” She continued by indicated that “um, the way that you speak to them the way that you talk to them, about their ideas, plans, about what they are trying to accomplish, and I would imagine that it has a lot to do with giving the youth opportunities so that they can learn.”

Some youth leaders felt that positive youth development also involved the feelings of individuals rather and the treatment of individuals, like Lara a previous junior board member, who stated, “positive youth development means that youth are going out and being successful, they are going to feel good in the organization.” She continued, “um, you know I don’t know that feel good consideration of feelings in a positive manner, [...] and then you know encouraging the youth’s development in whatever aspects benefits that individual, [...] um I guess in a positive way, is positive youth development to me.”

Tim, a current junior board member, expressed his thoughts by saying that he also has heard of the concept of positive youth development but did not fully grasp how to work with youth, he shared the following, “um I think it’s kind of the names in the definition, um you know it’s making a good impact and positive impact.” Tim further provided the example of if the youth

is having a bad day, then youth leaders can encourage them and say, ‘hey you stuck it out today’ and trying to ‘keep a positive impact’ in the young person’s lives.

### ***Youth Leaders in Action***

A second subtheme that developed from knowledge of positive youth development included, youth leaders in action. When working with youth it is important to not only have the proper knowledge but also the training for how to work with youth. When asked about the knowledge of positive youth development, many young people felt that having a training to develop positive youth development was beneficial, yet some youth leaders felt that they were self-taught so there was not a need for a training in how to work with youth to support positive youth development. Tim, current junior board member, overtly stated this in his idea of training on positive youth development:

I think that we kind of all are kind of I guess self-taught if that makes sense uh to a point, just because you know we do deal with youth and we are you know um high spirited individuals that are to let the kids learn you know. So, I think we do you know as a [junior board] we have, we go through multiple leadership trainings you know.

Lara as a previous junior board member shared her thoughts on a positive youth development training by stating, “I do think on some level, junior board members are trained in positive youth development just because they act and interact with so many youths members” she continued, “um but I think any sort of development training those junior board members could have um before they go out and interact with our three thousand plus members is going to be extremely beneficial.” She further explained her thoughts by indicating, “having a training to understand how people interact, how people think, and how people um learn, and communicate is beneficial as you must respect and figure out how to communicate with them, learning how to

communicate would be beneficial for a training.” From Lara’s conversation it was concluded that because people have different personalities, different ways of communicating they may understand positive youth development differently and because of this you need to understand their views and where they come from. As a previous junior board member, Cora also was another youth leader that believed in a training for young people so that their positive development is supported and shared the following:

Um, I think more education is always good, I do not think that there is any negative downside to having educational opportunities [...] one of the beauties that I got to experience as a youth leader is we are constantly um given new educational opportunities.

Alice, a previous ambassador, summed up her ideas of a positive youth development training nicely when she stated, “um I think that you know everybody could do somewhat of a training, whether it’s like job training or working with youth, or you know any sort of those, like you always need to sharpen your skills.” As Rachel, a previous ambassador, said, “there’s a difference between you know just casually speaking with kids and having you know meaningful conversation with kids, [...] and helping these kids’ um find what they’re passionate about.”

### **Adult Knowledge**

#### ***Making youth the best***

Making youth the best was a subtheme that was developed from adults’ knowledge of youth development. Overall adults had pieces of what positive youth development looked like within an organization but had not heard of the concept of positive youth development when working with young people. All the adult leaders believe that positive youth development was making the best for youth which included, being a safe place for young people, allowing them to



grow with no judgement and getting on their own level. Jill, an adult volunteer, was very open and honest in her knowledge of youth development and stated “positive youth development could mean anything” in her examples she concluded that it could be younger youth working in leadership positions in various clubs which provide them with positive opportunities. Jane, adult volunteer, had more of a defined definition as compared to Jill and said, “like positive reinforcement and propping them up, and yea I don’t know if I formally heard of it, but I believe it and I believe that’s how we run out deal, yes.”

When asked to explain more she indicated, “yeah, um kind of be that mentor be a safe space, and it’s okay to fail, but it is not ok to give up, try it”. As Jane suggested that the adults were a safe place and provided encouragement and reinforcement, George had different ideas, he referenced the 4-H organization:

Well, other than I don’t know if I have specifically what you’re referring to um except that you know “it’s making the best better, it’s the 4-H motto right? It’s um it’s what we practice here at Hereford all the time, team Hereford, were all in this together.

He felt that when a team was working together in a positive light, it demonstrated positive youth development but he did not have a clear definition of what it might be, “I try and look at things from a positive perspective and if a problem comes up it’s only a problem if you let it defeat you, it’s an opportunity for change and that is always a good thing.” While referencing change in positive youth development, Jane mentioned an example in which she states, “I try and tell my kids this all the time, especially when they do something new, this is the best place to do it because there is not going to be any judgement.” She added more to her thoughts when she said, “many leaders can’t get on the youth’s level.”

As adults never really had a clear picture of what positive youth development was, they did provide some good pieces as to what it could look like such as ‘reinforcement, prop them up’, ‘4-H motto’, looking at things from a positive standpoint and ‘getting on the youths level’. With Jane’s ideas of ‘getting on the youth’s level’ there were further questions regarding a training on PYD which clarified their definitions of PYD.

### ***Building Relationships***

The subtheme building relationships was developed from the knowledge theme. The subtheme building relationships demonstrated when adults were asked about a training that would support positive youth development within the AHA. This further explained their knowledge of youth development as they discovered that building relationships and getting on the youth’s level would be beneficial for a training to support positive youth development in young people. Jane, an adult volunteer, provided great thoughts when referencing positive youth development and a training:

I think a lot of times as adults we lose that we were kids once and there becomes this communication gap there becomes this, I don’t know if ego is the right word but where you can’t lower yourself to get on that younger level and I think we forget how to talk to kids, so I do think a training would be sensational.

Furthermore, Jill, an adult volunteer, suggested that not only on the youths’ level but also once they get on the youth’s level, to build relationships with them as “there is a need for building relationships with others and other students”, she said. Jane further clarified her thoughts on positive youth development when she said she cannot express or reiterate enough “no judgement” by indicating the following:

Every kid learns different and goes through different phases differently even if they are twins, or full siblings, and sometimes adults cannot handle that; they can't manage that, [...] they [the kids] are just you know on different learnings.

This statement really framed her knowledge on youth development as she realizes that all kids develop differently and at different ages. She proceeded to say that “when teaching young people teach at a non- judgmental caring environment because that is what they [the kids] grow with and we want to be positive and guide them” (Jane). While guiding them and teaching them, as an adult volunteer, George suggested that “participants within a training learn best when they are actively engaged and participate in small group.” He further alluded to what Jane recommended and that is to be the “safe place where uh they won't be criticized so they feel that what they have to say will be valued and embraced.”

## **Chapter 5 - Conclusions, Implications and Recommendations**

The American Hereford Association (AHA) had the desire to improve experiences for their members therefore it was important that perceptions of experiences were recognized. The purpose of this research was to identify perceptions of youth and adult partnerships, interactions, and learn expectations that both youth and adults have of each other. In addition, this study determined individuals' knowledge of youth development. In understanding the lived experiences of the junior board members, ambassadors, as well as adult leaders, researchers are better able to make recommendations to help the AHA better serve their youth. Consisting of one of the largest cattle breed organizations in the country, the AHA was chosen for this study because of their desire to promote research, education, and leadership within their youth.

The design of this research study was a mixed methods design, specifically, an explanatory sequential design in which quantitative results confirm those of the qualitative results (Toyon, 2021). Mixed methods allowed the researcher to combine both qualitative and quantitative methods into one study (Molina-Azorin, 2012). In this research study, the quantitative results give evidence to those results that are found within the qualitative results. Additionally, using a mixed method study allowed the researcher to provide a rich understanding of the research problem rather than just one method (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2007). The quantitative research utilized the Involvement and Interaction Rating Scale (Jones, 2004) which helped to analyze participants perceptions and interactions with each other. The qualitative research portion included eight interviews conducted through Zoom to better understand individuals' perceptions, interactions, experiences, and expectations of each other. Several conclusions can be drawn from the research results and are described below.

The recommendations of this research can be generalizable to youth trade industry organizations, but one must be cautious to consider the importance of youth, as well as youth and adult partnerships within the organization. If the organization goals, structures, ideas, and missions align with that of a youth and adult partnership organization like that of the American Hereford Association the results can be applicable. If the goals, mission, structure of the organization are not to enhance youth and adult partnerships, and the views of youth are not as important within the organization the results may not be as applicable.

### **Conclusion and Discussion**

The following are conclusions based on this research.

1. It can be concluded that adult volunteers were more positive than youth in their perceptions of how considerate adults are of youth opinions.
2. Current junior board members perceived their conversations with adults as more respectful than previous junior board members.
3. Current junior board members perceived their conversations with adults as more respectful than adult volunteers.
4. Adult staff perceived themselves as being more considerate of youth opinions than previous junior board members.
5. Current junior board members had higher perceptions of the statement; youth make their own decisions as compared to previous ambassadors.
6. Junior Board members and ambassadors felt that they were able to express their opinions during an interaction with an adult.
7. There was confusion among youth leadership roles between the previous junior board member and the previous ambassador during junior nationals.

8. Adults believed that they allowed youth to express their concerns, and their voices during meetings and events.
9. Adults enjoyed working with youth in their leadership roles.
10. Participants believed in building the organization and building positive interactions within it.
11. The junior board is expected to interact with the members and the Hereford Community.
12. The adult is expected to guide and mentor the youth.
13. The ambassador is expected to assist junior nationals with daily projects and tasks.
14. Individuals in the AHA had broad ideas on what PYD is.
15. Individuals felt optimistic about having a training on PYD.

### **Interactions- Research Question One**

Research question one sought to explore the perceptions of youth and adult interactions by those in youth leadership positions and the adult leaders of the American Hereford Association. Overall, both youth and adults were positive when working with each other in major events as indicated by overall summated mean scores of good to excellent. However statistical significance occurred in some areas, this being areas in which adults rated themselves slightly higher than youth leaders. It can be concluded that adults, both volunteers and staff were more positive than youth in their perceptions of how considerate adults were of youth opinions. Major findings of the perceptions of the interactions included significant differences in the way youth and adults felt about 'how considerate adults were of youth opinions' with previous junior board members rating their perceptions lower ( $M = 6.44$ ,  $SD = 2.17$ ) than adult volunteers ( $M = 8.60$ ,  $SD = 1.26$ ). In addition, previous junior board members rated their perceptions lower ( $M = 6.44$ ,  $SD = 2.77$ ) than adult staff ( $M = 8.44$ ,  $SD = 1.01$ ) on how considerate adults were on youth

opinions. This research is congruent to the work of Jones (2004) which indicated that adults were more positive in their overall perceptions when working with youth. This is further explained in Jones (2004) that as adults had more positive thoughts when working with youth it could be that since they are the leaders of the organization, they want strong partnerships with youth and believe that their interactions are positive and want to foster positive relationships. The adults in the AHA believe in positive youth development, which was revealed during the interviews when asked about their thoughts on positive youth development. Since adults want positive youth development and are interested in it, they often perceive themselves as having a higher perception than the youth.

A statistically significant difference was found in the way that current and previous junior board members felt on their perceptions of ‘youth and adults engage in respectful conversations.’ Current junior board members rated their perceptions higher ( $M = 9.81$ ,  $SD = .404$ ) than previous junior board members ( $M = 8.70$ ,  $SD = .948$ ). It can be concluded that current junior board members perceived their conversations with other youth and adults as more respectful than previous junior board members. Previous junior board members may not have felt that they had respect from adults while serving in their role as compared to the current junior board members. In addition, as they did not feel they had respect, this hindered their communication with the adults which made them believe that the conversation was not as respectful. Previous junior board members may not have felt as if their opinions mattered or were considered and perceived the adult as more of a leader that looked down on them. Similar to this research, the work of Price and Been (2018a) indicated that adults looked down on the youth as if they were children and were rarely nice and did not listen to their ideas or suggestions. However, in the research by Price and Been (2018a) there was a shift in how the youth viewed the adults the more time they

spent together. As indicated by some of the experiences of the previous junior board members their relationship with the adult grew stronger over time. Within Intergroup Contact Theory, members must have four conditions that must be met to achieve success of the group, this includes equal status within the situation, and common goals (Allport, 1954). It could be that because of their perceptions there was a lack of respect which then makes individuals feel as if they are not equal within the relationship. The previous junior board members may not have felt that they were equal as compared to the adults. Furthermore, when individuals work together to achieve common goals, they reduce prejudices and biases toward one another (Allport, 1954). It could be that some of the goals of the previous junior board members and the adults did not correlate as compared to the current junior board members.

It can also be concluded that current junior board members rated their perceptions of youth and adults engage in respectful conversations higher than adult volunteers. As current junior board members believed their conversations were more respectful than the adult, it could be that some of the adults at some point, did not feel respected in a conversation with some of the current junior board members. Although this is different than previous studies in which adults always viewed working with youth as positive, some earlier studies found that youth were problematic and that their attitudes needed to be fixed (Zeldin & Topitzes, 2002). When youth are thought of as members of the group that can contribute to the event or the organization, it allows for positive relationships to occur (Zeldin & Topitze, 2002). When intergroup cooperation occurs, which is a condition that should be met for Intergroup Contact Theory, both parties can see changes in behaviors and attitudes with each other (Allport, 1954). When both parties work together and intergroup cooperation exists, adults can feel safe in the community and feel as if youth can be the decision makers in the community and become influential (Allport, 1954; Jones,



2004). When there is cooperation among each of the group members, those in the ingroup (the adults) will have more positive attitudes about the outgroup (the youth) (Allport, 1954).

Lastly, statistically significant differences were found in how youth make their own decisions with previous ambassadors rating their perceptions lower ( $M = 4.36$ ,  $SD = 1.63$ ) than current junior board members ( $M = 6.73$ ,  $1.74$ ). It can be concluded that current junior board members make more decisions than the ambassadors because of their perceptions on the statement ‘youth make their own decisions’. As the ambassadors rated their perceptions lower on ‘youth make their own decisions’ one could imply that the role of the ambassador is not to make decisions but rather help execute what decisions are made. In addition, the term of the junior board is a three-year term whereas the ambassador is a three weeklong internship. The longer the term, the youth feel they can express their opinions and make decisions because they have built relationships within the organization. A component of the Relational Leadership Theory indicated empowerment (Schuyler, 2022); it could also be that the current junior board members feel more empowered to make the decisions as compared to the previous ambassadors. When individuals share power, it helps bring a more positive impact and positive self-esteem to others (Schuyler, 2022). As the ambassador’s role may not be to lead, they have some ideas that can be provided to help the organization. In an entity perspective of Relational Leadership Theory, it focuses on individuals and what individuals can bring to the organization (Uhl-Bien, 2006). As junior board members and ambassadors interact, they each bring certain characteristics to the event or organization which can allow them to make decisions and have an impact.

### **Experiences- Research Question Two**

Research question two was to describe experiences of youth and adult leaders in a leadership role within the American Hereford Association. It can be concluded that junior board

members and ambassadors felt that within their experiences they were able to express their concerns and ideas specifically during interactions with adults. It also can be concluded that adults believed that they allowed youth to express their voices and opinions during meetings and events. Similarly, junior board members always felt as if they could express their concerns regarding a contest, conference, or event. Several ambassadors commented on how they were given the opportunity to express their opinions not at the National Junior Hereford Expo but at the end of their internship which they thought helped to improve the experience for ambassadors in the future.

This research is congruent to the work of Bading et al. (2012) which indicated that youth perceived themselves as having a voice, decision-making power and responsibilities while serving in their leadership boards. When youth are participating and expressing their voices it allows them to be leaders within the group (Bading et al., 2012). The adult leaders in the American Hereford Association also believed that they provided youth with the ability to share their voices and their concerns during meetings or events. During the interviews several adults commented on how youth voice needs to be shared and that youth voice needs to be encouraged and heard. In addition, adults indicated, youth voice does matter, and adults should be the ones to listen to the youth ideas and help bring them to life. This corresponds to the work of Jones (2004) that indicated that adults were very positive in their overall rating of how they perceived working with young people. The adults in the AHA all had positive thoughts when working with the young people. Additionally, because of the adult's willingness to interact and embrace youth voice it can be concluded that adults enjoyed working with the youth as it made them feel young and learn a lot about the youth by hearing their thoughts and ideas. Price and Been (2018b) stated that when working with the youth, adults could enjoy themselves and it brought something out in

the youth when working with them in a partnership. In addition, Bading et al. (2012) indicated that even if adults do take charge in the organization, it is important that youth voice is considered. As both youth and adult voices were considered within the AHA, it can be concluded that adults do not take over everything when working on projects and do let youth have a voice and say in the decision-making process during their interactions.

Intergroup Contact Theory (Allport, 1954) indicates that when groups come together to help make decisions biases can be reduced. It can be noted that because youth and adults did interact, and they believed that their voices were heard very few biases were had among youth and adults. In addition, Intergroup Contact Theory affirms that as biases are reduced the ingroup (the adults) will have positive attitudes about the outgroup (adult) (Allport, 1954). It could be concluded that as both youth and adults were able to share and express concerns, attitudes about each group member were positive. In addition, there was equal status among the youth and the adults when youth were able to express their ideas and opinions. When there is equal status among the groups, there is no separation among the groups (outgroup or ingroup). One condition that Allport (1954) indicated for Intergroup Contact Theory to occur was intergroup cooperation. It could be that as youth and adults both felt that they allowed youth to share their concerns, there was cooperation among the groups which increases the positivity between each of the groups. As both youth and adults allowed for youth voice, both parties were able to see changes in the attitudes and behaviors of each other. When there are positive changes in behaviors and acceptance of each other positive youth development can occur (Jones, 2004).

Relational Leadership Theory sees leadership and relationships as forming connections and bonds between people (Dachler & Hosking, 1995). These relationships can be positive or negative depending on the relationship that is formed (Uhl-Bien, 2006). It could be said that

because youth and adults believed that their voices were heard that they were accepting of each other and their opinions. These strong ties between individuals form an entity perspective because individuals are both seen as contributing members to the organization. As individuals have a knowing mind, both youth and adults understand that each person's minds can be different from others. Within the Relational Leadership Theory there are several components that can occur, one is inclusiveness (Schuyler, 2022). Within the AHA, adults were inclusive of the youths' opinions and their ideas. It can also be observed that adults helped empower individuals to share their ideas and concerns about the events which can help the event become better. Empowerment is a component of Relational Leadership Theory (Uhl-Bien, 2006). Additionally, adults are purposeful in the way they lead and make decisions in the organization. These adults want the opinions of youth and want individuals to have purpose and meaning within the organization they are a part of. When adults lead with purpose there is room for positive youth development to occur (Uhl-Bien, 2006).

It can be concluded that through their experiences there was confusion among youth leadership roles between previous ambassadors and previous junior board members specifically during the Junior National Hereford Expo. While interviewing the youth, almost all indicated that there was confusion between the ambassador role and the junior board role specifically during junior nationals. As part of the Intergroup Contact Theory, Allport (1954) indicated that by bringing groups together prejudices and biases will be reduced. It could be that because there was confusion and misunderstandings in their roles, there was not equal status among the two youth groups and therefore it consisted of a lack of respect. Having an equal status among the group helps to reduce power, intergroup biases, and attitudes about each other (Pettigrew, 1998). With an equal status within the organization members can feel valued and recognized by other

group members (Pettigrew, 1998). Not only equal status but also intergroup cooperation. It could be said that because previous junior board members and previous ambassadors were confused about their role, there was no cooperation among them with a lack of respect. When there is a lack of respect, it creates the ‘segregation’, negative cooperation, and disrespectful conversations. Positive cooperation should occur so that group members can focus on the knowledge and expertise that they each have.

As the relationship is formed it can be weak, strong, or positive (Uhl-Bien, 2006), because previous junior board members and previous ambassadors were confused about their role, it could be concluded that they have a weaker connection with each other. Many of the youth leaders claim that previous ambassadors and junior board members were segregated in their roles, and they did not interact as much. While not interacting regularly, the relationship becomes weaker and eventually dissolves (Uhl-Bien, 2006). With different roles within the organization and being unclear about them, their relationship was nonexistent. Both junior board members and ambassadors should share power, which would allow them to share responsibilities toward future assignments and the future of the organization. When youth leaders in the organization feel empowered, they then can have a positive impact, and self-esteem, to help encourage others (Schuyler, 2022).

It can be concluded that through this research all individuals were positive in their belief on the mission of the AHA in building the organization through positive interactions. This can be explained by junior board members when they described that the young junior members are the future of the breed and individuals should help and assist them when needed. Junior board members also noted that through their experiences, they felt that all people, even a parent, were for the Hereford family. While interviewing ambassadors they too felt like they now were a part

of a family and helping to build positive interactions with not just the Hereford breed but the livestock industry because of their experiences working with the Hereford organization. As Intergroup Contact Theory posits, prejudices and negative behaviors and feelings towards one another are reduced when individuals work together to achieve a common goal (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998), the goal being too better and improve the Hereford Association. When individuals have common goals and then work together to achieve the goals, the ingroup members (adults) can benefit from seeing the potential of the outgroup (youth) (Allport, 1954). When youth feel like they matter they then can express their opinions and ideas to the organization and feel empowered within the group. Additionally, when the association feels as if they are inclusive, it allows more people to be able to share ideas and express concerns which increases positive behaviors in the organization.

### **Expectations- Research Question Three**

Research question three was to describe adult and youth leaders' expectations of each other when in leadership positions. It can be concluded that adults are expected to guide and mentor youth, and the youth are expected to interact with young members. Junior board members knew that their job was to be respectful and accessible to other members within the breed and they knew that their role was to assist the staff in putting on a great junior national. In addition, when asking the junior board what their expectations were of the ambassador, they felt that the ambassador was there to be an extension of the junior board and to assist. With these thoughts it concludes the reason for the confusion of the roles of each youth leader. When asking the ambassadors their expectations of their own role, they said they were a 'behind scenes' coordinator which gave them the same jobs as that of the junior board member specifically during the start of the Junior National Hereford Expo. Although confused about the youth roles,

the junior board members were appreciative of having the ambassadors at junior nationals because it gave them more people to assist with projects and the tasks at hand.

The youth viewed the adults as people that were to guide and mentor the younger members from time to time. The youth also wanted the adults to make them feel valued and appreciated. When youth and adults work together and the adult mentors the individuals, no biases occur which makes the youth feel included and positive attitudes emerge from the relationship (Lerner et al., 2006). Youth in this study wanted to see positive attitudes from the adults and reinforcement which allowed them to feel appreciated. Making people feel appreciated allows individuals to feel respected by others when in interactions. Young people can easily feel down and frustrated but if the adult continues to provide them with positive interactions where they are respectful of their opinions, learn from them and encourage them the youth will feel valued and respected (Lerner et al., 2005b).

In their role, the adults wanted the youth to grow and become good leaders, be the do-er the role models and the leaders for younger members. In addition to being the doer, and role models adults also wanted the youth to take on responsibilities which is a huge commitment. Similar to the work of Price and Been (2018b) adults wanted youth to provide a different perspective, since they are the ones that are the heart of the organization. As the youth are the ones that are the heart of the organization, it could be that the adults wanted to empower the youth to reach their full potential and empower them to make a difference. The adults in the organization mentored and guided the youth but did not do the work for the youth. As Price and Been (2018b) suggested in their research, the adults offered the youth to take part in the project by giving them a say and expressing their voices. The adults would then mentor the youth into that idea or task. Within the Relational Leadership Theory, one component is being purposeful in

leadership (Schuyler, 2022). In this research, adults felt as if they were purposeful by allowing youth to make decisions and follow their own thoughts yet guiding and demonstrating for them when needed. As the adult leaders worked closely with the junior board, they were transparent, and promoted positive attitudes involving everyone in the decision making.

### **Knowledge- Research Question Four**

Research question four was to determine the knowledge of positive youth development (PYD) by both youth and adult leaders within the American Hereford Association. It can be concluded that individuals in the AHA had broad ideas on what PYD is. Junior board members stated that PYD is helping youth and being good role models. For many youth leaders they felt that positive youth development was a way in which young people were treated but did not know what that looked like. Positive youth development means that youth and adults are working together to find the strengths of the youth. Words such as ‘encouragement’ and ‘treatment of youth’ and allowing youth to see their value were words that were used by the youth leaders of the organization when describing PYD. Missing from the youth’s definition was how to implement positive youth development and carry it out in the organization. Finding a young person’s strength and carrying it out in an organization allows the youth to feel a sense of belonging and empowerment (Lerner et al., 2006). Finding the youth’s strength is an important part of positive youth development in addition to learning together so that you can build upon what you already know and use your knowledge to help individuals (Lerner et al., 2006).

It can be concluded that adults did have some perspective on the knowledge of what positive youth development is. All the adult leaders felt that PYD was making the best for youth which included being a safe place for them and getting on their level to teach them. Adults were more defined in saying that positive youth development is not just getting on the youths’ level



rather it was propping them up and encouraging them. Adults viewed positive youth development as propping individuals up and building relationships which is congruent to making the youth feel empowered to complete certain tasks like that in Relational Leadership Theory (Uhl-Bien, 2006; Schuyler, 2022). Building relationships was also something that was discussed by the adults, when individuals are building relationships, cooperation is built among each other which is a factor in Intergroup Contact Theory (Allport, 1954). Having the intergroup cooperation allows individuals to reduce biases and negative thoughts about each other (Allport, 1954; Pettigrew, 1998).

Given their definitions of PYD, it can be concluded that individuals were optimistic about receiving training on what PYD is and how to implement it. Although some junior board members felt that they are self-taught when working with young people, they agree that a training might be useful as there is a difference between working with youth and saying that you like youth. Several topic ideas were mentioned, like how to console a sad child, and how to encourage youth as both youth and adults felt that training on PYD would strengthen their leadership skills. Adults also felt that a training would be good when working with young people because this would allow adults to feel as if they are kids again by getting on their level. The definition of getting on their level and being a safe place, indicated that adults understood what positive youth development means as each youth develops at their own pace and to find the youths strengths you need to teach at their level, be supportive and non-judgmental while allowing youth to grow be valued and embrace their strengths.

### **Implications**

Based on the conclusions of this research several implications can be depicted.

- 1) How youth and adults should interact within a trade industry organization.

- 2) How adult leaders should involve young people in decision making within a trade industry.
- 3) How trade industry organizations should manage their young people.
- 4) What youth relationships should look like when communicating and working together towards a common goal.
- 5) What youth leadership should look like within a trade industry organization.
- 6) How youth and adults believe they demonstrate PYD in a trade industry organization.

The conclusions of this research have implications for the way youth and adults should interact. Adults within the organization should be the mentor and should be positive in their interactions towards youth (Lerner & Lerner, 2011a). When adults are positive in their interactions the young person is more likely to view the relationship as positive. This also has implications for when the relationship is positive the youth and the adult will be able to build a strong relationship in which the young person feels safe and feels empowered by the adult (Lerner et al., 2013). When youth feel empowered, they feel more comfortable sharing their ideas and expressing their opinions. In addition, adults are to bring experience to the organization and have the experience of working with young people. If the adult sets the example of working with the young person, they can pass on this experience and teach the young leader on how to work with others.

This research also has implications for how adults should include young people in the decision-making process. As adults viewed their perceptions of being considerate of youth voices as more positive than the previous junior board members, one can imply that previous junior board members did not feel as if they were able to express their opinions or ideas as much. Even when the adult says that they are providing youth a voice, the youth may not perceive

themselves as having a voice. This might be because the youth feel as if the adult is the one that has power and may not feel as comfortable expressing their opinions and or voice. With this perception, this research has further implications for how adult leaders should involve young people in the decision-making process.

This research also has implications for how trade industry organizations should manage their young people. With the confusion of roles between previous junior board members and previous ambassadors we can imply that there were not as clear of expectations for the roles of the youth leaders. Eccles and Gootman (2002) conducted research on youths' need for mattering within a community, they concluded that when young people recognize their importance within the community and when they feel as if they matter, they will more than likely have more positive perceptions towards the organization itself. Without clear expectations it creates confusion, lack of respect for each other and a lack of having the sense of mattering within the organization. Adult leaders within the trade industry should manage young people in a way that expectations are clear so that respect for each role is given and that young people feel like they matter.

This research also has implications for what youth relationships should look like when communicating and working together towards a common goal. As young people work together within an organization their relationship should be positive and respectful. When there is a lack of clarity in roles or responsibilities it can create confusion which can create a separation in how the young leaders work together. Respect should be given to each other as youth leaders in their roles. As young people respect each other they can then communicate in a positive manner which would allow them to foster positive relationships helping to achieve the goals of the organization and feel empowered (Lerner et al., 2011a).

This research also has implications for what youth leadership should look like in an organization. Youth leaders should be accountable, respectful, be responsible, and treat their leadership roles like a job. Several adults commented on how the youth leader's role was to show up and be active, as well as be the role model for younger members in the organization. It is important that youth leaders like the junior board members and the ambassadors show up and be accountable for their actions as they have several young members looking up to them.

The last implication that this research entails is on the knowledge that both youth and adults have within a trade industry. As indicated, this research has implications for what adults and youth believe PYD is and how they are implementing this within the trade industry. Although both youth and adults felt that they were demonstrating positive youth development within the organization, many were unclear as to what positive youth development really was and how to implement positive youth development in the organization. As adults and youth were not very clear in what positive youth development is, there are several recommendations that will help guide them on what positive youth development is as it is more than propping up youth and believing in them. As the youth said, they are self-taught when it comes to positive youth development but did provide further ideas as to topics that could lead into a training.

## **Recommendations**

Based on the implications and conclusions there are several recommendations for this research:

1. It is recommended that all adult leaders in organizations be purposeful and intentional in their interactions with young people to set examples for them. Being purposeful and intentional includes clearly communicating with young people and being positive role models.

2. When working with young people in an organization, be inclusive to all youth leaders and ask for their opinions and thoughts specifically if they do not speak up during meetings or events.
3. Clarify roles and responsibilities of all youth leadership positions in the organization or program so that there is less confusion among the young people.
4. To help control for biases and improve equal status among youth leadership in an organization, it is recommended that adults recognize all youth leaders publicly and the same regardless of their position and or time spent in the role.
5. It is recommended that adult leaders and volunteers in trade industries participate in a professional development training on what Positive Youth Development is as they interact and help develop young people.
6. The American Hereford Association adult leaders should continue to interact in a positive manner when working with young people.
7. When communicating with the junior board members and the ambassadors during meetings or events it is recommended that the adult leaders (both staff and volunteers) ask for the opinions and concerns of the youth leaders. Communicating with youth leaders will help increase positive interactions.
8. The American Hereford Association adult staff and or volunteer leaders should clarify the roles, responsibilities and expectations of the junior board member and the ambassador prior to the National Junior Hereford Expo
9. The American Hereford Association should continue the leadership training with junior board members and ambassadors prior to the start of the National Junior Hereford Expo.

10. The American Hereford Association should encourage junior board members and ambassadors to work together during the National Junior Hereford Expo.

11. It is recommended that all employees, adult volunteers that work directly with youth leaders (junior board and ambassadors) participate in a training course on positive youth development, and its impact on young people.

As a mixed method explanatory sequential design study, this research uncovered numerous recommendations for future research opportunities and future recommendations for the American Hereford Association and those organizations and industries that work with youth. As this research uncovers what youth and adult partnerships are like within a trade industry organization, the first recommendation this research revealed was that adult leaders within the trade industry should continue to interact positively with its youth. It is recommended that all adult leaders in trade industry organizations be purposeful and intentional in their interactions with young people to set examples for them. When adult leaders are purposeful in their leadership, they make decisions that allow young people to follow their lead (Schuyler, 2022). When the adult is setting a good example and being positive by promoting positive attitudes and being supportive, the young person is able to see this and follow their actions (Lerner et al., 2006). In addition, the adult should be purposeful in their communication with the young person. When individuals communicate and are respectful in their communication, positive youth development can occur (Lerner & Lerner, 2013). This study revealed that youth felt great about their interaction with adults and that the adult was able to provide them with the help, advice, and the guidance that they needed. Positive youth development demonstrates positive relationships focusing on the assets of the youth (Lerner et al., 2006). Young people within the AHA felt as if they were able to express their concerns given their assets and strengths, they

brought to the organization. If adults continue to allow youth to express their voices the relationship will thrive, and youth will not feel as intimidated by the adult.

When working with young people in any organization, it is recommended that adults be inclusive to all youth leaders and ask for their opinions and thoughts specifically if they do not speak up. Several young people within this study revealed although they were able to express their concerns and ideas during meetings, to allow all people to share ideas, it is recommended that staff and volunteers within the Hereford Association ask for the opinions of the youth leaders. When asking for opinions of youth leaders this will help to ensure that youth that are more reserved can provide input within the organization. If the youth is more reserved, they may feel as if they are pushed over by the loud voices within the organization and may not feel as if they can express their voice. If the adults in the association make sure that everyone has equal opportunity to share concerns or ideas during meetings, this will help to confirm that young people are heard within the association.

Not just asking for youth opinions for those that are more reserved but to also clarify the roles and responsibilities of the youth leaders. It is recommended to clarify roles and responsibilities of all youth leadership positions in any organization or program so that there is less confusion among the young people. Results of this research indicated that youth leaders were confused about their roles during the Junior National Hereford Expo. This perhaps could be because the ambassador role was new during their time as junior board members. However, to help clarify the role of the ambassador and the role of the junior board member, it is recommended that staff clarify what is expected of the junior board member and the ambassador during the Junior National Hereford Expo. In addition, have both ambassadors and junior board members work together on tasks. If roles are clarified it will help to reduce confusion, and may

increase positive attitudes and feelings towards one another. As some ambassadors may have felt inferior as compared to the junior board member, having junior board members and ambassadors work together on tasks will help the junior board member see the importance of the ambassador role, in addition the ambassadors will also understand the role of the junior board member. While working together may help with the confusion of the roles and increase respect for each other, it will also make all youth leaders feel as if they matter within the organization.

While the previous 2022 Junior National Hereford Expo did have both junior board and ambassadors working together on projects, the continuation of this model, would help illustrate the need for both the junior board and the ambassador role. In addition to having both junior board and ambassadors working together on tasks, the AHA should continue with the leadership training for junior board members and ambassadors prior to the start of the Junior National Hereford Expo. Having a trained professional adult on leadership and youth development work with the youth allows the youth to learn about each other prior to the big event. While being an insider to the organization, and participating in the leadership training myself in 2022, I heard several compliments about how the training provided junior board members and ambassadors the ability to get to know one another and learn to work together prior to the week of Junior Nationals. If this leadership training continues, both junior board members and ambassadors will be able to have positive thoughts and respect each other while in their roles. Prior to 2022 the results of this research indicated that junior board and ambassadors did not work together as much, and the training will provide junior board members and ambassadors the ability to interact more. Additionally, it may be useful for adult leaders and staff in the association to be present during this training. If adults are present during the training and participating, it allows everyone to be on the same wavelength when working with the youth and throughout the week. Taking



just two hours out of the day for the training would also provide the adults with a break from their everyday responsibilities during junior nationals. This also would allow both ambassadors and junior board members to understand and see that adults really care for their cooperation and their willingness to help them work together on tasks to make the event the best. Once the training has been in place for several years, future research may be needed to determine the impact of the leadership training and if it has helped the youth leaders respect each other and work together.

With the leadership training for the youth and the adult, it will help the junior board members and ambassadors work together. It is recommended that the staff in the AHA encourage the junior board members and the ambassadors to work together on tasks. To encourage the junior board and the ambassadors to work together, the AHA should continue to have tasks assigned in which both a junior board member and an ambassador work together to complete the task. For example, when a junior board member oversees a contest, the junior board member could be assigned an ambassador to help them with running the contest at the junior national. This may include, making sure that the junior board member has all their supplies, judges are placed in the correct location to judge, and contestants are present and where they need to be. With the ambassador's help the junior board member may also feel relieved because of the assistance with the contest. The small tasks that the ambassador can help with may cause less pressure for the junior board member in charge of the contest. If the AHA encourages both ambassadors and the junior board members to work together, they begin to respect each other and understand the need for each other's roles and responsibilities.

To help control for biases, and equal status among youth leaders in an interaction, it is recommended that adults recognize all youth leaders publicly and the same regardless of their

position and or time spent in the role. During the interviews with youth, they suggested that more interaction between the groups should happen because then each group would understand their own roles and who has been doing what task for the Junior National Hereford Expo. Youth leaders also suggested to recognize the ambassadors more often throughout the shows which would help promote the youth leadership position and the experience. This also would help change young people's perceptions of the youth leadership roles and help control for biases about the positions. Solutions to help control for the biases include having all staff realize the importance of all youth leadership roles regardless of their time spent with the association. This could be as simple as having the announcer for the show introduce the ambassadors during the same time as when the junior board members are mentioned which would allow everyone to understand that both positions are equal, and no position is superior to the other. Furthermore, if time allows youth suggested to bring the ambassadors to the forefront sooner so that they can learn more about each other and interact more with the junior board members through meetings which would help build the relationships and help them increase respect for each other and their roles within the Hereford Association.

Lastly, it is recommended that adult leaders and volunteers in trade industries, and organizations participate in professional development trainings on what Positive Youth Development is as they interact and help develop young people. As a trade industry organization that interacts and develops young people, it is recommended that both youth and adults in the AHA participate in a professional development training on positive youth development. When asked about PYD many individuals had broad ideas of what PYD is and how it is used within an organization. Several knew that it was something in which made the youth better, and being positive in interactions with young people but were unsure of what it may look like in the

organization. A training by a professional in youth development would give individuals in the organization the knowledge needed for working with youth, and youth and adult partnerships. There are several aspects of PYD that are useful when working with young people and provide individuals the knowledge on how to develop people positively. Furthermore, when asked about topic ideas, youth stated that it would be nice to understand how to console a member that is upset that he or she did not do well on a contest or at the show. Going through a training would help the youth understand how to console the members of the organization. Additionally, the training would also help define terms of PYD this includes youth voice, mentoring and guiding. Results of this research indicated that there may be differences in what both youth and adults feel is considered youth voice. Adults felt that they were giving youth a voice and that all youth voices were heard but during the interviews with young people, they felt that although they were able to express their opinions and ideas, they felt that their voices may not have been heard because their ideas were not used for the project. With an understanding of what is meant by ‘being heard’ or youth voice it allows young people to feel as if they are being heard even when their ideas are not being used. A training would also impact young people because they will learn skills and knowledge that will be useful for their future careers as there are many careers in which people communicate and work together.

### **Future Research**

This study was exploratory in nature as it explored the perceptions, experiences, expectations of youth and adult partnerships and knowledge of youth development within a trade industry organization. The AHA served as the trade industry organization which revealed information about the relationship between youth leaders, adult volunteers, and staff within the association. There are several recommendations for future research based on the findings of this

study. The target population for this study was junior board members (retired in 2019-2023), ambassadors (serving in 2019-2022), adult leaders, and staff that served in a youth leadership role for the American Hereford Association. Given the population of this study, future research is needed to determine if roles, perceptions, expectations, experiences, and knowledge change in future years. A similar study in the future should look at youth leaders that resigned in their positions in 2023 and beyond to determine any changes in perceptions, expectations, experiences, and knowledge.

Future research may be needed to understand youth and adults 'perceptions and understanding of concepts based on PYD. The interviews revealed that adults felt that they were giving youth a voice and hearing them by allowing the youth to express their opinions and concerns. However, youth knew that they were able to express their concerns but in conversation with youth it felt as if the youth did not feel heard when the adult did not use their ideas. With the misunderstanding of what 'being heard' means, a training would help to clarify the definitions of what does it mean to be heard and have your voice recognized. Once youth and adults understand the concepts of PYD future research might be needed to determine if perceptions among the partnership remain the same or if they have changed given their understanding of PYD.

This study concluded that there was confusion among the ambassador and junior board roles during the Junior National Hereford Expo. Due to the ambassador position being relatively new and perhaps just starting during some of the junior board leadership experiences, it may have caused confusion, uncertainty, and disrespect towards the ambassador role. Future research may be needed to determine if there is still confusion among the leadership roles beyond the year 2023. A similar study that looks at the relationship between ambassadors and junior board

members in the future may provide some insight as to when the separation between junior board and ambassadors occurred and how youth leaders have adapted towards working together despite their differences in understanding their roles and responsibilities.

When asked about the knowledge of youth development, several participants indicated a brief overview of what PYD could be but never had a strong definition of what PYD is. When a training occurs on PYD for staff and youth in the association, future research is needed to determine if the participants knowledge of PYD increases after the training takes place. Once individuals have participated in a training, future research could look at the impact of the training and how it has changed participants perspectives of PYD. This research could also look at how participants feel that PYD is incorporated in to the AHA as many individuals were unsure of what PYD may look like in the organization as PYD is more than just positive relationships with young people.

Future research may also be needed to determine the impact of the leadership training that started in 2022 for ambassadors and junior board members. In participating in the 2022 Junior National Hereford Expo, a training was developed to help assist with team building and the partnership between youth leaders. Future research focusing on the perceptions of the training and the expectations will help the AHA better understand how they can bridge the gap between the two youth leadership roles. Understanding the impact of the leadership training on both ambassadors and the junior board members will help the AHA determine if the leadership training should continue.

This research can inform any organization with youth and adult partnerships, it is important that these relationships are positive, and that youth and adults are positive in their perceptions when working with each other. As this research revealed some misunderstandings

between relationships, being clear in expectations and modeling positive behaviors will help both youth and adults build strong connections. Additionally, utilizing a training to teach PYD will help youth and adults learn knowledge and developmental stages of people, giving them the opportunity to apply what they have learned in the organization to strengthen partnerships and interactions with their members.

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## Appendix A - Institution Review Board Approval



TO: Jonathan Ulmer  
Communications & Ag Education  
Manhattan, KS 66506

Proposal Number IRB-11241

FROM: Sara Rosenkranz, PhD, Chair  
Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects

DATE: 07/22/2022

RE: Approval of Proposal Entitled, "Exploring and Identifying Youth Adult Partnerships, and the Lived Experiences and Practices of Youth and Adult Leaders within the American Hereford Association.."

The Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects has reviewed your proposal and has granted full approval. This proposal is **approved for three years from the date of this correspondence.**

APPROVAL DATE: 07/22/2022

EXPIRATION DATE: 07/21/2025

In giving its approval, the Committee has determined that:

No more than minimal risk to subjects

This approval applies only to the proposal currently on file as written. Any change or modification affecting human subjects must be approved by the IRB prior to implementation. All approved proposals are subject to continuing review, which may include the examination of records connected with the project. Announced post-approval monitoring may be performed during the course of this approval period by URCO staff. Injuries, unanticipated problems or adverse events involving risk to subjects or to others must be reported immediately to the Chair of the IRB and / or the URCO.

Electronically signed by Sara Rosenkranz, PhD on 07/22/2022 3:03 PM ET

203 Fairchild Hall, Manhattan, KS 66502 | (785) 532-3224 | fax: (785) 532-3278

## **Appendix B - Instrument**

### **American Hereford Association Research**

Q1 Welcome!

Youth and adult partnerships are an essential component of a youth's well-being and provide them with the skills they need to develop appropriately. Today, the possibilities and opportunities for young people to develop into leaders is important.

The American Hereford Association is one organization in which young people can acquire the skills they need to become successful as leaders. The main purposes of this research are to identify perceptions of youth and adult partnerships, understand the knowledge of youth development by both youth and adults as well as to describe the experiences of the junior board members, the ambassadors, and the expectations that adults have of the youth in their leadership role within the AHA.

This survey will allow you to rate the level of youth involvement with other youth, adult involvement with other adults, and youth working together with adults in the AHA.

Your responses will help determine how researchers can better serve young people in order to build quality relationships between youth and adults. In this study we are solely interested in group data and not individual data so confidentiality will be ensured. Personal and contact information will be automatically removed from the responses to ensure confidentiality.

Your feedback is essential. Your knowledge and experiences are needed by taking 10 minutes of your time to answer the following questions. There is no right or wrong answer. Answer all questions based on your perception or opinion. You are encouraged to answer all questions as this will provide researchers with the most accurate knowledge to better serve youth.

Please remember that your participation in this research is voluntary, and we understand that we may be examining personal and or sensitive information in this survey. You may choose to

withdraw from participation in this study at any time by closing out of the questionnaire.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me, Jaclyn Tweeten at [jtweeten@ksu.edu](mailto:jtweeten@ksu.edu). If you have any questions about the rights of research subjects or research related injury please contact the Institution Review Board Chair, Lisa Rubin, Chair, Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224; Heath Ritter, Acting Associate Vice President for Research Compliance, 203 Fairchild Hall, Kansas State University, Manhattan, KS 66506, (785) 532-3224.

Thank you for your participation!

Q2 Demographics

Please indicate the best response in the following questions.

Describe your role with the American Hereford Association. If you were a previous ambassador and or junior board member and are now employed by the AHA answer using insight from your role as an ambassador or junior board member.

- ☐ Current ambassador (1)
  - ☐ Previous Ambassador (2)
  - ☐ Current Junior Board Member (3)
  - ☐ Previous Junior Board Member (4)
  - ☐ Adult Volunteer/ Leader within the AHA (5)
  - ☐ Adult Staff within the AHA (6)
-

*Display This Question:*

*If Demographics Please indicate the best response in the following questions. Describe your role wit... = Adult Staff within the AHA*

Q3 How long have you been employed by the American Hereford Association?

- ☐ 1-5 years (1)
  - ☐ 6-10 years (2)
  - ☐ 11-15 years (3)
  - ☐ 16+ years (4)
- 

*Display This Question:*

*If Demographics Please indicate the best response in the following questions. Describe your role wit... = Adult Volunteer/ Leader within the AHA*

Q4 How long have you been a volunteer leader for the American Hereford Association?

- ☐ 1-5 years (1)
  - ☐ 6-10 years (2)
  - ☐ 11-15 years (3)
  - ☐ 16+ years (4)
-

Q5 Please indicate your age.

☐ 17-25 (1)

☐ 26-35 (2)

☐ 36-45 (4)

☐ 46-55 (6)

☐ 56-65 (7)

☐ 66+ (8)

---

Q6 What is your gender?

☐ Female (1)

☐ Male (2)

☐ Non- binary (4)

☐ Prefer not to disclose (5)

---

Q7 Please select one that best describes the area in which you live?

- ☐ Rural/Farm (1)
  - ☐ Suburban (2)
  - ☐ Urban/City (3)
  - ☐ Other (4) \_\_\_\_\_
- 

Q8 How would you describe yourself?

- ☐ American Indian/ Alaskan Native (1)
  - ☐ Asian (2)
  - ☐ Black or African American (3)
  - ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander (4)
  - ☐ White (5)
  - ☐ Two or More Races/ Other (6)
  - ☐ Some other Race (7)
  - ☐ Unknown (8)
-

Q9 Are you Hispanic/ Latino

☐ Yes (1)

☐ No (2)

---

Page Break



## Q10 Junior Board Involvement

When completing this part of the survey, think of your involvement with the American Hereford Association and the interactions of youth and adults. The purpose of this survey is to allow you to rate your involvement in the American Hereford Association, your involvement with other youth, and your involvement with adults in the American Hereford Association. Your responses will help determine what is needed to make strong quality relationships within the American Hereford Association.

Directions: Click on the circle that you feel is the most accurate statement.

Example: If you feel the statement on the left best describes your perception or situation you would click on the dot closer to that statement. If you believe both statements are accurate or somewhat accurate you would 'click' near the middle.

Please see example below.

Youth and Adults in the American Hereford Association are nice people		Youth and Adults in the American Hereford Association are not nice people
---	--	---

	1 (1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	
Junior Board members take a lot of initiative working on projects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Junior Board members take little initiative working on projects.
Junior Board members are sitting around with nothing to do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Junior Board members are busy with several tasks.

Junior Board members arrive to meetings/events on time.



Junior Board members show up late for meetings/events.

Junior Board members are given little or no responsibilities for specific tasks or assignments.



Junior Board members are given major responsibilities for specific tasks or assignments.

Junior Board members rely on themselves to make key decisions.



Junior Board members make few decisions for themselves, often relying on the decision of the adults.

Junior Board members have full access to information that is needed to make decisions.



Junior Board members have very little access to information that is needed to make decisions.

Junior Board members never have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions.



Junior Board members always have the opportunity to discuss their concerns about group decisions.

Junior Board members frequently share ideas that matter to them.



Junior Board members rarely share ideas about things that matter to them.

Junior Board members do not



Junior Board members have

have an equal  
vote in the  
decision  
making  
process.

Junior Board  
members help  
one another in  
developing new  
skills.

Junior Board  
members are  
not fully  
committed to  
their duties.

Junior Board  
members are  
very excited  
about their  
involvement  
with projects.

Junior Board  
members are  
not concerned  
with  
community  
change.



an equal vote in  
the decision  
making process.

Junior Board  
members do not  
help one another  
in developing  
new skills.

Junior Board  
members are  
fully committed  
to their duties.

Junior Board  
members have  
little or no  
interest in being  
involved with  
projects.

Junior Board  
members are  
very concerned  
with community  
change.

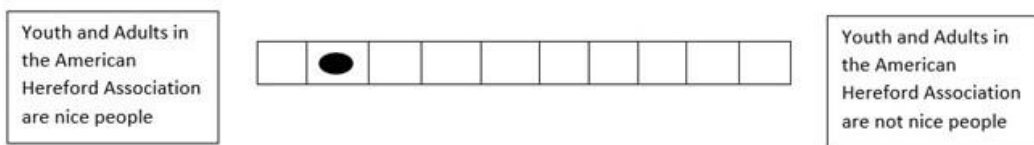
## Q11 Ambassador Involvement

When completing this part of the survey, think of your involvement with the American Hereford Association and the interactions of youth and adults. The purpose of this survey is to allow you to rate your involvement in the American Hereford Association, your involvement with other youth, and your involvement with adults in the American Hereford Association. Your responses will help determine what is needed to make strong quality relationships within the American Hereford Association.

Directions: Click on the circle that you feel is the most accurate statement.

Example: If you feel the statement on the left best describes your perception or situation you would click on the dot closer to that statement. If you believe both statements are accurate or somewhat accurate you would 'click' near the middle.

Please see example below.



	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)	
Ambassadors take a lot of initiative in working on projects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ambassadors take little initiative in working on projects.
Ambassadors are sitting around with nothing to do.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ambassadors are busy with several tasks.
Ambassadors arrive to meetings/events on time.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ambassadors show up late for meetings/events.

Ambassadors  
are given little  
or no  
responsibilities  
for specific  
tasks.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Ambassadors  
are given major  
responsibilities  
for specific  
tasks or  
assignments.

Ambassadors  
rely on  
themselves to  
make key  
decisions.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Ambassadors  
make few  
decisions for  
themselves,  
often relying on  
the decision of  
adults.

Ambassadors  
have full access  
to information  
that is needed  
to make  
decisions.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Ambassadors  
have very little  
access to  
information that  
is needed to  
make decisions.

Ambassadors  
never have the  
opportunity to  
discuss their  
concerns about  
group  
decisions.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Ambassadors  
always have the  
opportunity to  
discuss their  
concerns about  
group decisions.

Ambassadors  
frequently  
share ideas that  
matter to them.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Ambassadors  
rarely share  
ideas about  
things that  
matter to them.

Ambassadors  
do not have an  
equal vote in  
the decision  
making  
process.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Ambassadors  
have an equal  
vote in the  
decision making  
process.

Ambassadors  
help one  
another in  
developing new  
skills.

☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐ ☐

Ambassadors do  
not help one  
another in  
developing new  
skills.

Ambassadors are not fully committed to their duties.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ambassadors are fully committed to their duties.
Ambassadors are very excited about their involvement with projects.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ambassadors have little or no interest in being involved with projects.
Ambassadors are not concerned with community change.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ambassadors are very concerned with community change.

## Q12 Adult Involvement

When completing this part of the survey, think of your involvement with the American Hereford Association and the interactions of youth and adults. The purpose of this survey is to allow you to rate your involvement in the American Hereford Association, your involvement with other youth, and your involvement with adults in the American Hereford Association. Your responses will help determine what is needed to make strong quality relationships within the American Hereford Association.

Directions: Click on the circle that you feel is the most accurate statement.

Example: If you feel the statement on the left best describes your perception or situation you would click on the dot closer to that statement. If you believe both statements are accurate or somewhat accurate you would 'click' near the middle.

Please see example below.

Youth and Adults in the American Hereford Association are nice people	<div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div><div></div></div>	Youth and Adults in the American Hereford Association are not nice people
---	---	---

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)	
Adults display a willingness to accept and nurture youth leadership.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Adults display a sense of wanting to control youth.
Adults tend to be followers of youth leadership.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Adults display a tendency to want to guide youth.
Adults always listen to the suggestions of youth.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Adults never listen to the suggestion of youth.
Adults never totally take over everything when working on projects and activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Adults always take over everything when working on projects and activities.
Adults learn new skills from one another.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Adults do not learn new skills from one another.
Adults never take the youth seriously.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Adults always take the ideas of youth seriously.



Adults encourage youth to come up with their own ideas.	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Adults command youth to follow the direction of adults.
Adults have no interest in being involved with projects.	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Adults are very excited about being involved with projects.
Adults are very concerned with community change.	<input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/> <input type="radio"/>	Adults are not very concerned with community change.

### Q13 Youth- Adult Interaction Indicators

When completing this part of the survey, think of your involvement with the American Hereford Association and the interactions of youth and adults. The purpose of this survey is to allow you to rate your involvement in the American Hereford Association, your involvement with other youth, and your involvement with adults in the American Hereford Association. Your responses will help determine what is needed to make strong quality relationships within the American Hereford Association.

Directions: Click on the circle that you feel is the most accurate statement.

Example: If you feel the statement on the left best describes your perception or situation you

would click on the dot closer to that statement. If you believe both statements are accurate or somewhat accurate you would 'click' near the middle.

Youth and Adults in  
the American  
Hereford Association  
are nice people

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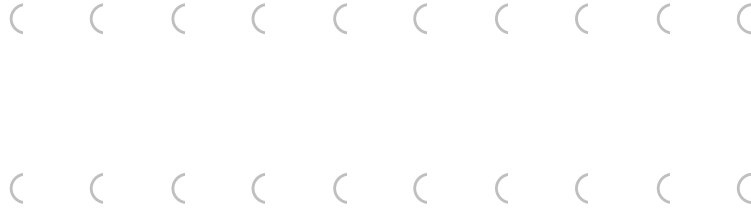
Youth and Adults in  
the American  
Hereford Association  
are not nice people

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	6 (6)	7 (7)	8 (8)	9 (9)	10 (10)	
Youth and adults get along well together.		⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	There is arguing/ tension among youth and adults.
Youth appear uneasy and intimidated by adults.		⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	Youth seem comfortable working with adults.
Adults seem comfortable working with youth.		⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	Adults appear uneasy and afraid of the youth.
Adults do not consult with youth on project activities at all.		⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	Adults actively and consistently consult with youth on project activities.
Adults provide direction and mentoring for youth.		⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	Adults provide little or no direction and mentoring for youth.
Youth always go along with the decision of the adults.		⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	Youth never go along with the adults and always make their own decisions.
Youth and adults often agree on most decisions.		⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	⌋	Youth and adults rarely agree with one another.

Youth rely on the experiences of adults when making decisions.	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(		Youth make decisions based on their own experiences.
Youth and adults work separately on project tasks.	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(		Youth and adults work together as partners on project tasks.
Youth and adults indicate mutual learning from one another.	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(		Youth and adults learn little from one another.
Youth and adults rarely help one another develop new skills.	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(		Youth and adults frequently help one another develop new skills.
Adults are very considerate of youth opinions.	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(		Adults are not considerate of youth opinions.
Youth are not at all considerate of adult opinions.	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(		Youth are very considerate of adult opinons.
Youth/ adults always engage in respectful conversations.	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(	(		Youth/ adults never engage in respectful conversations.

Youth do not trust adults to handle power responsibly.

Adults trust youth to handle power responsibly.



Youth trust adults to handle power responsibly.

Adults do not trust youth to handle power responsibly.

#### Q14 Junior Board and Ambassador Interaction Indicators

When completing this part of the survey, think of your involvement with the American Hereford Association and the interactions of youth and adults. The purpose of this survey is to allow you to rate your involvement in the American Hereford Association, your involvement with other youth, and your involvement with adults in the American Hereford Association. Your responses will help determine what is needed to make strong quality relationships within the American Hereford Association.

Directions: Click on the circle that you feel is the most accurate statement.

Example: If you feel the statement on the left best describes your perception or situation you would click on the dot closer to that statement. If you believe both statements are accurate or somewhat accurate you would 'click' near the middle.

Please see example below.

Youth and Adults in the American Hereford Association are nice people



Youth and Adults in the American Hereford Association are not nice people

	1 (1)	2 (2)	3 (3)	4 (4)	5 (5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	
Junior Board and Ambassadors get along well.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	There is arguing/ tension among junior board and ambassadors.
Junior Board members appear uneasy and intimidated by ambassadors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Junior Board members seem comfortable working with ambassadors.
Ambassadors seem comfortable working with Junior Board members.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Ambassadors appear uneasy and afraid of junior board members.
Junior Board members do not consult with ambassadors on project and activities.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Junior board members actively and consistently consult with ambassadors on project and activities.
Junior Board members provide direction and mentoring for the ambassadors.	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Junior board members provide little or no direction and mentoring for ambassadors.
Junior board members always go	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	Junior board members never go

along with the decision of the ambassadors.

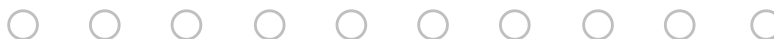
Junior Board members and ambassadors often agree on most decisions.

Junior Board members rely on the experiences of the ambassadors when making decisions.

Junior board members and ambassadors work separately on project and tasks.

Junior Board members and ambassadors indicate mutual learning from one another.

Junior board members and ambassadors rarely help one another develop new skills.



along with ambassadors and almost always make their own decisions.

Junior Board members and ambassadors rarely agree with one another.

Junior board members make decisions based on their own experiences.

Junior board members and ambassadors work together as partners on projects and tasks.

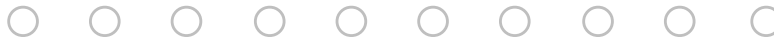
Junior board members and ambassadors learn little from each other.

Junior board members and ambassadors frequently help one another develop new skills.

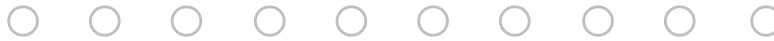
Junior board members are very considerate of ambassador opinions.



Ambassadors are not at all considerate of junior board members opinions.



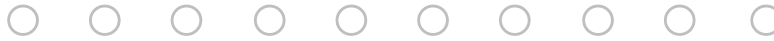
Junior board members/ ambassadors always engage in respectful conversations.



Junior board members do not trust ambassadors to handle power responsibly.



Ambassadors trust junior board members to handle power responsibly.



Junior board members are not at all considerate of ambassador opinions.

Ambassadors are very considerate of junior board members opinions.

Junior board members and ambassadors never engage in respectful conversation.

Junior board members trust ambassadors to handle power responsibly.

Ambassadors do not trust junior board members to handle power responsibly.



## **Appendix C - Interview Protocol**

### **Interview Protocol- Adult**

Exploring and Identifying Youth Adult Partnerships, the Lived Experiences and Practices of Youth and Adult Leaders within the American Hereford Association.

The zoom and or face to face interviews will follow a protocol for each session this includes:

- Welcome
- Review Informed Consent
- Question and Answer
- Wrap-up

#### **Welcome**

Hi, thank you for your willingness to participate in this research.

I am Jaclyn Tweeten, and I appreciate you sharing your time and thoughts with me today. We are going to focus our discussion on your experiences while serving as a [Insert Role i.e. Junior Board Member or Ambassador, or adult within the Hereford Association]. My task is to keep this conversation going and keep us on time. We should finish up within an hour.

#### **Informed consent form review**

You have given consent to participate in this research interview. [*Briefly walk through some of the major points of the interview, purpose, this will be recorded, all personal names and contact information will be removed prior to publishing results and distribution etc, and ask for any questions they may have*]

The American Hereford Association has recognized the desire to do better in improving experiences for young people and it is important to understand the experiences had by junior board members as well as ambassadors in the American Hereford Association (AHA). In this study we are identifying the perceptions of youth and adult partnerships, understanding the knowledge and practice of youth development by both youth and adults as well as to describe the experiences of the junior board members, the ambassadors and the expectations that adults have of the youth for their leadership within the AHA.

This interview will last no more than an hour, and as a reminder, this interview will be recorded which will help with analyzing the results, all personal names and contact information will be removed from all published, public and shared work with the American Hereford Association to ensure confidentiality. You not required to answer any questions in which you feel uncomfortable and may skip questions to allow for time to process.

Before we begin, do you have any questions for me.

## **Introductions**

To get started, please tell me a little about yourself. (Ask the interviewee to share about themselves).

## **Question and answer period**

*Note: the researcher will use phrases such as “Tell me more”, “Could you give me an example?”, “Could you explain that?” as prompts solicit more detailed information when needed.*

## **Involvement with the AHA.**

1. What is your role with the American Hereford Association? If you have a role
2. Describe your experiences working with the Junior Board? Describe your experiences working with the Ambassadors?
3. What do you believe is the role of the adult members that work directly with the youth (either junior board and or the ambassadors)?
4. What are your expectations for the junior board? What are your expectations for the ambassadors of the NJHA?

## **Youth Development within the AHA**

*Youth voice refers to the distinct ideas, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and actions of young people as a collective body. The term youth voice often groups together a diversity of perspectives and experiences regardless of backgrounds, identities and cultural differences.*

5. How do you feel that the American Hereford Association supports positive interactions?
6. How do you feel that the American Hereford Association supports youth voice?
7. How do you engage with other youth and adults in the American Hereford Association?
8. Describe a time in which youth thoughts knowledge and actions were used in a program or project?
  - a. How did this make you feel?
  - b. How do you think this impacted the youths development?

9. Describe a time in which youth thoughts knowledge and actions were NOT used in a program or project?
  - a. How did this make you feel?
  - b. How do you think this impacted the youths development?
10. What is the best part of working with the junior board members? What is the best part of working with the ambassador team?

### **Knowledge of Youth Development**

*Before we conclude, I'd like to ask about positive youth development. Specifically:*

11. Have you heard of the concept or idea of "positive youth development" when working with young people?
  - a. If so, what does positive youth development mean to you?
  - b. If not, what could positive youth development mean?
12. Do you think that having training in how to work with youth so their positive development is supported would be of benefit to AHA [Junior Ambassadors; Ambassadors; Adult Leaders]?
  - a. If so, what are some of the topics that you think AHA could provide training on that would be beneficial to [Junior Ambassadors; Ambassadors; Adult Leaders]?
13. Thinking back on your experiences, were there ways that you supported positive interactions with young people as an AHA [Junior Ambassador; Ambassador; Adult leader]?

### **Wrap-up**

Thank you, we have now reached the end of the interview questions. I want to sincerely thank you for your time and input. If you have any questions or final comments, please feel free to email them to me following this interview.

Thank you.

## **Interview Protocol- Junior Board**

Exploring and Identifying Youth Adult Partnerships, the Lived Experiences and Practices of Youth and Adult Leaders within the American Hereford Association.

The zoom and or face to face interviews will follow a protocol for each session this includes:

- Welcome
- Review Informed Consent
- Question and Answer
- Wrap-up

### **Welcome**

Hi, thank you for your willingness to participate in this research.

I am Jaclyn Tweeten, and I appreciate you sharing your time and thoughts with me today. We are going to focus our discussion on your experiences while serving as a [Insert Role i.e. Junior Board Member or Ambassador]. My task is to keep this conversation going and keep us on time. We should finish up within an hour.

### **Informed consent form review**

You have given consent to participate in this research interview. [*Briefly walk through some of the major points of the interview, purpose, this will be recorded, all personal names and contact information will be removed prior to publishing results and distribution etc, and ask for any questions they may have*]

The American Hereford Association has recognized the desire to do better in improving experiences for young people and it is important to understand the experiences had by junior board members as well as ambassadors in the American Hereford Association (AHA). In this study we are identifying the perceptions of youth and adult partnerships, understanding the knowledge and practice of youth development by both youth and adults as well as to describe the experiences of the junior board members, the ambassadors and the expectations that adults have of the youth for their leadership within the AHA.

This interview will last no more than an hour, and as a reminder, this interview will be recorded which will help with analyzing the results, all personal names and contact information will be removed from all published, public and shared work with the American Hereford Association to ensure confidentiality. You not required to answer any questions in which you feel uncomfortable and may skip questions to allow for time to process.

Before we begin, do you have any questions for me.

## **Introductions**

To get started, please tell me a little about yourself. (Ask the interviewee to share about themselves).

## **Question and answer period**

*Note: the researcher will use phrases such as “Tell me more”, “Could you give me an example?”, “Could you explain that?” as prompts solicit more detailed information when needed.*

## **Involvement with the AHA.**

1. What is your role while serving as a junior board member?
2. Describe your experiences while serving as a junior board member for the American Hereford Association?
3. What do you believe is/was the role of the adult members during your time as a junior board member?
  - a. Did the adult follow through with this role? Explain?
4. What was/is the role of the ambassador during your time as a junior board member?
  - a. Did the ambassador follow through with this role? Explain?

## **Youth Development within the AHA**

*Youth voice refers to the distinct ideas, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and actions of young people as a collective body. The term youth voice often groups together a diversity of perspectives and experiences regardless of backgrounds, identities and cultural differences.*

5. How do you feel that the American Hereford Association supports positive interactions?
6. How do you feel that the American Hereford Association supports youth voice?
7. How do you/ did you engage with other youth and adults in the American Hereford Association?
8. Describe a time in which your thoughts knowledge and actions were used in a program or project?
  - a. How did this make you feel?
9. Describe a time in which your thoughts knowledge and actions were NOT used in a program or project?

- b. How did this make you feel?
10. What is the best part of serving the role of a junior board member?

### **Knowledge of Youth Development**

*Before we conclude, I'd like to ask about positive youth development. Specifically:*

- 11. Have you heard of the concept or idea of "positive youth development" when working with young people?
  - c. If so, what does positive youth development mean to you?
  - d. If not, what could positive youth development mean?
- 12. Do you think that having training in how to work with youth so their positive development is supported would be of benefit to AHA [Junior Ambassadors; Ambassadors; Adult Leaders]?
  - e. If so, what are some of the topics that you think AHA could provide training on that would be beneficial to [Junior Ambassadors; Ambassadors; Adult Leaders]?
- 13. Thinking back on your experiences, were there ways that you supported positive interactions with young people as an AHA [Junior Ambassador; Ambassador; Adult leader]?

### **Wrap-up**

Thank you, we have now reached the end of the interview questions. I want to sincerely thank you for your time and input. If you have any questions or final comments, please feel free to email them to me following this interview.

Thank you.

## **Interview Protocol- Ambassador**

Exploring and Identifying Youth Adult Partnerships, and the Lived Experiences and Practices of Youth and Adult Leaders within the American Hereford Association.

The zoom and or face to face interviews will follow a protocol for each session this includes:

- Welcome
- Review Informed Consent
- Question and Answer
- Wrap-up

### **Welcome**

Hi, thank you for your willingness to participate in this research.

I am Jaclyn Tweeten, and I appreciate you sharing your time and thoughts with me today. We are going to focus our discussion on your experiences while serving as a [Insert Role i.e. Junior Board Member or Ambassador]. My task is to keep this conversation going and keep us on time. We should finish up within an hour.

### **Informed consent form review**

You have given consent to participate in this research interview. [*Briefly walk through some of the major points of the interview, purpose, this will be recorded, all personal names and contact information will be removed prior to publishing results and distribution etc, and ask for any questions they may have*]

The American Hereford Association has recognized the desire to do better in improving experiences for young people and it is important to understand the experiences had by junior board members as well as ambassadors in the American Hereford Association (AHA). In this study we are identifying the perceptions of youth and adult partnerships, understanding the knowledge and practice of youth development by both youth and adults as well as to describe the experiences of the junior board members, the ambassadors and the expectations that adults have of the youth for their leadership within the AHA.

This interview will last no more than an hour, and as a reminder, this interview will be recorded which will help with analyzing the results, all personal names and contact information will be removed from all published, public, and shared work with the American Hereford Association to ensure confidentiality. You not required to answer any questions in which you feel uncomfortable and may skip questions to allow for time to process.

Before we begin, do you have any questions for me.

## **Introductions**

To get started, please tell me a little about yourself. (Ask the interviewee to share about themselves).

## **Question and answer period**

*Note: the researcher will use phrases such as “Tell me more”, “Could you give me an example?”, “Could you explain that?” as prompts solicit more detailed information when needed.*

## **Involvement with the AHA.**

1. What is/was your role while serving as an ambassador?
2. Describe your experiences while serving as an ambassador for the American Hereford Association?
3. What do you believe is/was the role of the adult members during your time as an ambassador?
  - f. Did the adult follow through with this role? Explain?
4. What was the role of the junior board member during your time as an ambassador?
  - g. Did the junior board follow through with this role? Explain?

## **Youth Development within the AHA**

*Youth voice refers to the distinct ideas, opinions, attitudes, knowledge and actions of young people as a collective body. The term youth voice often groups together a diversity of perspectives and experiences regardless of backgrounds, identities and cultural differences.*

5. How do you feel that the American Hereford Association supports positive interactions?
6. How do you feel that the American Hereford Association supports youth voice?
7. How do you/ did you engage with other youth and adults in the American Hereford Association?
8. Describe a time in which your thoughts, knowledge and actions were used in a program or project?
  - h. How did this make you feel?
9. Describe a time in which your thoughts, knowledge and actions were NOT used in a program or project?
  - i. How did this make you feel?



10. What is the best part of serving the role of an ambassador?

### **Knowledge of Youth Development**

*Before we conclude, I'd like to ask about positive youth development. Specifically:*

11. Have you heard of the concept or idea of "positive youth development" when working with young people?
  - a. If so, what does positive youth development mean to you?
  - b. If not, what could positive youth development mean?
12. Do you think that having training in how to work with youth so their positive development is supported would be of benefit to AHA [Junior Ambassadors; Ambassadors; Adult Leaders]?
  - j. If so, what are some of the topics that you think AHA could provide training on that would be beneficial to [Junior Ambassadors; Ambassadors; Adult Leaders]?
13. Thinking back on your experiences, were there ways that you supported positive interactions with young people as an AHA [Junior Ambassador; Ambassador; Adult leader]?

### **Wrap-up**

Thank you, we have now reached the end of the interview questions. I want to sincerely thank you for your time and input. If you have any questions or final comments, please feel free to email them to me following this interview.

Thank you.

## **Appendix D - Contact Letters**

### **Pre-notification Email**

**Sent by the American Hereford Association Oct. 10th**

Greetings-

You are being contacted because you have previously served as a Junior Board Member, Ambassador, or are an Adult who works with youth in the National Junior Hereford Association.

We are partnering with Kansas State University PhD Candidate Jaclyn Tweeten on her research with the American Hereford Association. Jaclyn served as an ambassador at the 2022 Junior National Hereford Expo. The main purpose of her research is to identify perceptions of youth and adult partnerships, understand the knowledge of youth development by both youth and adults and learn the experiences of the junior board members and ambassadors during their leadership role.

Please watch for an email coming in the next few days that will be titled 'American Hereford Association Youth Development Survey'. To access the survey, click on the link directly from the email. Once opened, this survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete. This research is important as it will provide the American Hereford Association with the most accurate knowledge so that they can better serve youth and volunteers within the organization.

Please remember that your participation in this research is voluntary and we understand that we may be examining personal or sensitive information in this survey. You may choose to withdraw from participation at any time by closing out of the questionnaire. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Jaclyn Tweeten at [jtweeten@ksu.edu](mailto:jtweeten@ksu.edu).

Thank you for your cooperation we look forward to your responses!

Jaclyn Tweeten  
Research Assistant  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS

Amy Cowan  
Director of Youth Activities & Foundation  
American Hereford Association  
Kansas City, MO

Jon Ulmer  
Professor  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS

## **Invitation Letter- Email #1**

**Sent Oct. 12<sup>th</sup>**

To: Junior Board Members, Ambassadors and Adults in the National Junior Hereford Association

You are being contacted because you have previously served as a Junior Board Member, Ambassador, or are an Adult who works with youth in the National Junior Hereford Association. Youth and adult partnerships are an essential component of a youth's well-being and provide them with the skills they need to develop appropriately.

The American Hereford Association is one organization in which young people can acquire the skills they need to become successful as leaders. The main purpose of this research is to identify perceptions of youth and adult partnerships, understand the knowledge of youth development by both youth and adults as well as to describe the experiences of the junior board members, the ambassadors, and the expectations that adults have of the youth in their leadership role within the AHA. You are being asked to participate in a survey that will allow you to rate the level of youth involvement with other youth, adult involvement with other adults, and youth working together with adults in the AHA. In addition, this survey will capture your understanding of youth development. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

Your responses will help determine how researchers can better serve young people to build quality relationships between youth and adults. In this study we are solely interested in group data and not individual data so confidentiality will be ensured. Personal and contact information will be automatically removed from the responses to ensure confidentiality. Once individual and all personal data has been removed from this survey, the results will be shared with staff from the American Hereford Association. Please remember that your participation in this research is voluntary and we understand that we may be examining personal and or sensitive information in this survey. You may choose to withdraw from participation in this study at any time by closing out of the questionnaire.

Your feedback is essential. Your knowledge and experiences are needed by taking 15 minutes of your time to answer the following questions. You are encouraged to answer all questions as this will provide researchers with the most accurate knowledge to better serve youth. Please click the link below to access the survey. [INSERT LINK TO SURVEY HERE]. Please feel free to contact Jaclyn at [jtweeten@ksu.edu](mailto:jtweeten@ksu.edu) with any questions! Thank you for your participation, we look forward to your responses!

Sincerely,

Jaclyn Tweeten  
Research Assistant  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS

Amy Cowan  
Director of Youth Activities & Foundation  
American Hereford Association  
Kansas City, MO

Jon Ulmer  
Professor  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS

## **First Reminder- Email #2**

**Sent Oct. 15th**

(FIRST NAME)

A few days ago, we sent you an email asking for your participation in a survey on Youth and Adult partnerships within the American Hereford Association.

Youth and adult partnerships are an essential component of a youth's well-being and provide them with the skills they need to develop appropriately. Today, the possibilities and opportunities for young people to develop into leaders is important.

The American Hereford Association is one organization in which young people can acquire the skills they need to become successful as leaders. The main purpose of this research is to identify perceptions of youth and adult partnerships, understand the knowledge of youth development by both youth and adults as well as to describe the experiences of the junior board members, the ambassadors, and the expectations that adults have of the youth in their leadership role within the AHA.

This survey will allow you to rate the level of youth involvement with other youth, adult involvement with other adults, and youth working together with adults in the AHA. In addition, this survey will capture your understanding of youth development. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

In this study we are solely interested in group data and not individual data so confidentiality will be ensured. Personal and contact information will be automatically removed from the responses to ensure confidentiality. Once individual and all personal data has been removed from this survey, the results will be shared with staff from the American Hereford Association.

Your feedback is essential. You are encouraged to answer all questions as this will provide researchers with the most accurate knowledge to better serve youth. Please click the link below to access the survey. We hope that providing you with this survey link makes it easier to respond. To complete the survey, click on the link below. [INSERT LINK TO SURVEY HERE]

Please feel free to contact Jaclyn at [jtweeten@ksu.edu](mailto:jtweeten@ksu.edu) with any questions!

Thank you for your participation, we look forward to your responses!

Sincerely,

Jaclyn Tweeten  
Research Assistant  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS

Amy Cowan  
Director of Youth Activities & Foundation  
American Hereford Association  
Kansas City, MO

Jon Ulmer  
Professor  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS

## **Second Reminder- Email #3**

**Sent Oct. 21<sup>st</sup>.**

(FIRST NAME)

Last week, we sent you an email asking for your participation in a survey on Youth and Adult partnerships within the American Hereford Association.

The main purpose of this research is to identify perceptions of youth and adult partnerships, understand the knowledge of youth development by both youth and adults as well as to describe the experiences of the junior board members, the ambassadors, and the expectations that adults have of the youth in their leadership role within the AHA.

This survey will allow you to rate the level of youth involvement with other youth, adult involvement with other adults, and youth working together with adults in the AHA. In addition, this survey will capture your understanding of youth development.

In this study we are solely interested in group data and not individual data so confidentiality will be ensured. Personal and contact information will be automatically removed from the responses to ensure confidentiality. Once individual and all personal data has been removed from this survey, the results will be shared with staff from the American Hereford Association.

Your feedback is essential. If you have not completed the survey, we encourage you to do so. Your knowledge and experiences are needed by taking 15 minutes of your time to answer the following questions. You are encouraged to answer all questions as this will provide researchers with the most accurate knowledge to better serve youth.

We hope that providing you with this survey link makes it easier to respond. To complete the survey, click on the link below.

[INSERT LINK TO SURVEY HERE]

Please feel free to contact Jaclyn at [jtweeten@ksu.edu](mailto:jtweeten@ksu.edu) any questions!

Thank you for your participation, we look forward to your responses!

Sincerely,

Jaclyn Tweeten  
Research Assistant  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS

Amy Cowan  
Director of Youth Activities & Foundation  
American Hereford Association  
Kansas City, MO

Jon Ulmer  
Professor  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS

### **Email Reminder #3**

**Sent Oct. 30<sup>th</sup>.**

(FIRST NAME)

A few weeks ago, we sent you an email asking for your participation in a survey on Youth and Adult partnerships within the American Hereford Association.

This survey will allow you to rate the level of youth involvement with other youth, adult involvement with other adults, and youth working together with adults in the AHA. In addition, this survey will capture your understanding of youth development. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes to complete.

In this study we are solely interested in group data and not individual data so confidentiality will be ensured. Personal and contact information will be automatically removed from the responses to ensure confidentiality. Once individual and all personal data has been removed from this survey, the results will be shared with staff from the American Hereford Association.

Your feedback is essential. If you have not completed the survey, we encourage you to do so.

We hope that by providing you with this survey link it makes it easier to respond. To complete the survey, click on the link below.

[INSERT LINK TO SURVEY HERE]

Please feel free to contact Jaclyn at [jtweeten@ksu.edu](mailto:jtweeten@ksu.edu) with any questions!

Thank you for your participation, we look forward to your responses!

Sincerely,

Jaclyn Tweeten  
Research Assistant  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS

Amy Cowan  
Director of Youth Activities & Foundation  
American Hereford Association  
Kansas City, MO

Jon Ulmer  
Professor  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS

**Fourth and Final Reminder- Email Reminder #4**

**Sent Friday Nov. 4<sup>th</sup>.**

In October, we sent you an email asking for your participation in a survey on Youth and Adult partnerships within the American Hereford Association. If you have already completed the survey, thank you for your participation.

The survey will allow you to rate the level of youth involvement with other youth, adult involvement with other adults, and youth working together with adults in the AHA. In addition, this survey will capture your understanding of youth development.

In this study we are solely interested in group data and not individual data so confidentiality will be ensured. Personal and contact information will be automatically removed from the responses to ensure confidentiality.

Your feedback is essential. If you have not completed the survey, we encourage you to do so. The survey will take approximately 15 minutes and will provide researchers with the most accurate knowledge to better serve youth.

We hope that by providing you with this survey link it makes it easier to respond. To complete the survey, click on the link below. The survey will close on Sunday November 6<sup>th</sup> at 5 pm. We appreciate your time towards this research.

[INSERT LINK TO SURVEY HERE]

Please feel free to contact Jaclyn at [jtweeten@ksu.edu](mailto:jtweeten@ksu.edu) with any questions!

Thank you for your participation, we look forward to your responses!

Sincerely,

Jaclyn Tweeten  
Research Assistant  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS

Amy Cowan  
Director of Youth Activities & Foundation  
American Hereford Association  
Kansas City, MO

Dr. Jon Ulmer  
Professor  
Kansas State University  
Manhattan, KS

## **Appendix E - Email Invitation for Follow Up Interview**

Hi [NAME]-

As you may recall you received a survey from me regarding youth and adult perceptions and experiences in leadership roles in the AHA. I am sending this email as I am asking participants to do a follow up interview with me about their experiences serving as a junior board member, ambassador, or adult in the AHA.

The main purpose of the interview is to better understand perceptions of youth and adult partnerships and experiences while serving in the leadership role. In addition, I am interested in capturing your understanding of youth development, and to learn the expectations that young people have of adults and that adults have of youth in their leadership roles.

The interview will be conducted through Zoom and will take no more than one hour.

Again, I want to remind you that in this research all personal names and contact details will be removed from the responses to ensure confidentiality. Once the individual contact information and all personal data has been removed, the results will be grouped together and shared with staff in the American Hereford Association.

Please respond with yes, I would like to participate or no I regret to inform you I cannot participate in the interview at this time. If you choose yes to participate, please let me know a day or time you would be available for the one-hour interview through zoom sometime starting next week.

With any questions, please feel free to reach out to me at [jtweeten@ksu.edu](mailto:jtweeten@ksu.edu).

I look forward to interacting with you in an interview.

Have a wonderful day!

Jaclyn

**Jaclyn Tweeten**  
Research Assistant  
Kansas State University  
Communications and Agricultural Education  
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## Appendix F - Codebook

Name	Description
<b>Knowledge</b>	
Definition of PYD	Individuals own definitions of what they think positive youth development is.
PYD training/thoughts	Indicates topics that individuals felt would be appropriate for a training for youth or adults.  Statements that indicate perceptions of a positive youth development training, thoughts about the training and ideas.
<b>Interaction</b>	
Mutual Respect	Statements that describe youth feeling valued and accepted by adults and youth that are considerate of each other's opinions.
Youth Voice	This references the ideas, opinions, and attitudes as well as knowledge of youth that may have been or may not have been used in a program or a project. Statements that reflect the youths' ideas thoughts and knowledge on a program and how they felt about having their thoughts used or not used in the process.  Statements that refer to adults finding the positives in youth, finding their needs, and embracing what the youth are good at and incorporating this into their program.
<b>Experiences</b>	
Community Obligation	Statements that relate to the youth experiences in which they have an interest in helping the community grow.
Mutual Learning	Statements that are related to both youth and adults learning from one another and helping each other with skill development.

Youth Responsibility	<p>Statements that indicate adult perceptions of how youth are carrying out tasks and responsibilities in their positions.</p> <p>Statements that indicate youth perceptions of how they feel they are carrying out tasks and responsibilities of the leadership role.</p>
<b>Expectations</b>	
Adult Support	<p>Statements that reflect how the adult supports the youth. Youth perceptions on how they view the adult role. Adult perceptions on what they believe in their role when working with youth.</p>
Youth Responsibility	<p>Referencing how adults view the leadership role, and how they view young people as taking over projects/programs.</p> <p>How adults felt that youth were carrying out their roles in their position.</p> <p>Also statements that reference youth knowing they are responsible for certain tasks while serving in the leadership role either junior board members or ambassadors.</p>