

EMOTIONAL INTELLIGENCE OF STATE 4-H LEADERSHIP YOUTH IN MISSISSIPPI

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Abstract

Effectiveness of youth programs is becoming increasingly important everyday. The Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team is an example of a youth program in need of proving its effectiveness. Emotional Intelligence Scores may be the tool for measuring the effectiveness of the Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team. This study was done to both to measure the Emotional Intelligence of 4-H Leadership Team Participants compared to Non-Leadership Team Participants, and to help validate the Mayer, Salovey, Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test: Youth Version (MSCEIT: YV). Selected demographic variables were also studied to determine if they were intervening variables. Data analysis revealed no statistically significant differences between the two groups. There were also no statistically significant differences found between the emotional intelligence scores and the demographic variables. Further research should be done with this study once normative scores for the instrument are determined. Also, this study should be conducted with a larger population.

Theoretical Framework

Leadership is a priority of the 4-H program because it considers it a good investment for the future of our country. Leadership is also an essential part of emotional intelligence. In order to be a leader, one must be able to manage oneself, and be able to understand and manage others (Boyd, Herring, and Briers, 1992). These two points are the last category associated with the Mayer and Salovey emotional intelligence model.

“4-H is a community of young people across America who are learning leadership, citizenship, and life skills” (R. Wilkinson, personal communication, July 26, 2005). Mississippi has a State 4-H Leadership Team, which has three different components. This team is for youth 14-18, and who have been a member of 4-H for at least one year. The youth have to be 14-18 on January first of the current year. The Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team is designed to help youth develop skills to lead a group or be a part of decision making (R. Wilkinson, personal communication, March 4, 2005). It also helps youth become citizens willing to contribute to the community.

There are several definitions of emotional intelligence. “Even though it does not have an agreed-upon, precise definition, emotional intelligence is the ability to understand and manage emotions” (Barchard & Hakstian, 2004 p. 438). Emotional intelligence is a concept that has been around for many years. Mayer and Salovey define emotional intelligence as “the ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion in thought, understand and reason with emotion, and regulate emotion in the self and others” (as cited in Mayer, Salovey, & Caruso, 2000, p. 396). If State 4-H Leadership Team members have a higher emotional intelligence than

Non-State 4-H Leadership Team members, then it can be suggested that the leadership team is effective in making members more emotionally intelligent.

Goleman (1998) bases emotional intelligence on characteristics from the emotional competence framework. This framework shows the relationship between five dimensions of emotional intelligence and the twenty-five emotional competencies. The competencies are split into two categories. These categories are personal competence and social competence.

According to Mayer and Salovey, “we define emotional intelligence as the ability to perceive and express emotion, assimilate emotion in thought, understand and reason with emotion, and regulate emotion in the self and others” (as cited in Mayer, et al., 2000, p. 396). This model also has different components as seen in the Figure 1.

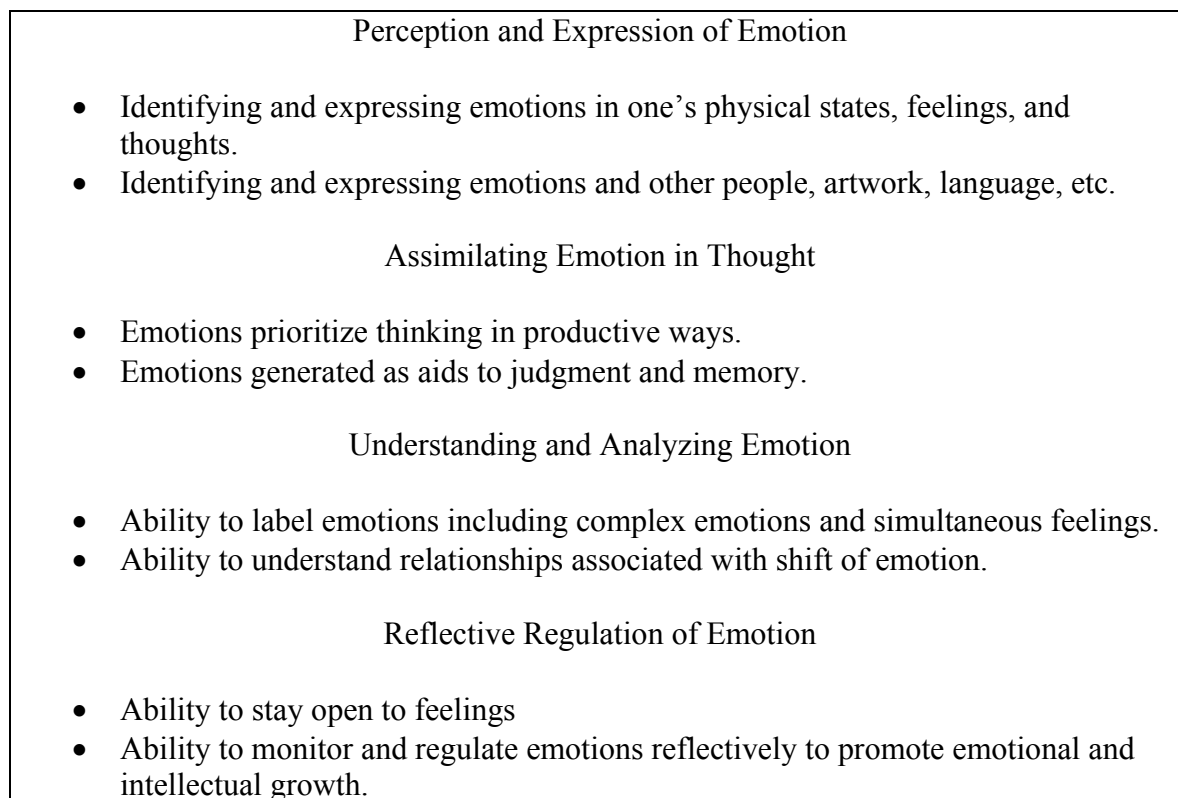


Figure 1. Components of the Mayer and Salovey Model.

Source: Mayer, J.D., Salovey, P., & Caruso, D. (2000). Chapter 18: Models of Emotional Intelligence. *Handbook of Emotional Intelligence*. Cambridge, UK, Cambridge University Press.

The Mayer-Salovey-Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test, Version 2 (MSCEIT V2.0) was used to measure emotional intelligence in adults. The MSCEIT V2.0 had two sets of reliability measures: one for expert criterion and one for general criterion. This was due to the fact that:

Reliability analyses are based on participants scored responses at the item level, and scores at the item level vary depending on whether responses are compared against the general or expert criterion. However scored, reliability at the total scale and area levels

was excellent. Reliability at the branch level was very good...reliabilities were overall higher at the task level, but sometimes lower than desirable. (Mayer, Caruso, Salovey, & Sitarenios, 2003, p. 101)

It should be noted that the reliabilities at the task level were higher than the previous instrument for measuring emotional intelligence. The research instrument used for this study, MSCEIT- YV is in the development stage, and is being developed by Mayer, Salovey and Curuso.

Leadership is easy to recognize, but tough to define. Leadership development is a goal for all youth programs (Seevers & Dormody, 1995). Individuals need leadership in all aspects of life. Teachers, coaches, or the president of an association, like 4-H, need leadership skills. “4-H members have a duty to use leadership in their clubs or within their project groups. These experiences will develop even stronger leadership that is essential to the future of Mississippi and to the future of the United States” (Wilkinson & Holder, 2001, p. 2). Leadership is the ability to help others help themselves and the ability to work in a group. Miller (cited in Seevers, Dormody, & Clason, 1995, p. 28) stated that “youth leadership life skills development as self-assessed and organization-specific ‘development of life skills necessary to perform leadership functions in real life.’”

4-H identifies certain skills that can be taught to develop leadership. Once developed, these abilities can be used in many ways for the rest of the individual’s life. Thus, they are called them life skills. The seven 4- H leadership life skill areas are described here:

- Understanding Self- Understanding and developing a positive attitude about who you are, what you like, and what you want to be.
- Communicating- Effective two-way sharing of information through writing, listening, speaking, and body language.
- Getting Along With Others- Developing an understanding of how you relate to other people you meet and how you accept and appreciate the difference between others and yourself.
- Learning to Learn- Understanding the attitudes, techniques, and methods that can help learning take place and how you can be a positive force in increasing you own and others’ learning.
- Making Decisions- Learning a process and approaches to setting goals, solving problems, and taking individual or group action.
- Managing- Choosing and using things available to get the things you want. Management involves identifying resources (time, things, people, or money) and using those resources effectively.

- Working With Groups- Learning how groups of people work together and how to help groups to accomplish their goals (Wilkinson & Holder, 2001, p.2).

Some of the activities offered for Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team Members include “4-H Legislative Day, Senior 4-H Retreat, Assisting with Mississippi 4-H Congress, Assisting with 4-H Day at the Mississippi Fair, Mississippi 4-H Teen Leadership Conference (training team or participant), and Mississippi 4-H Congress Planning Committee” (“Application,” n.d., p. 3).

There have been several journal articles discussing the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership in adults. Effective leadership has many descriptions. George (2000) suggests that leadership is saturated with emotion, and that emotional intelligence should be considered in the leadership field. According to George (2000), leadership styles are attributed to the components of emotional intelligence. She also suggests that emotional intelligence can improve leadership ability. For example, “leaders who are high on emotional intelligence will be better able to take advantage of and use their positive, moods and emotions to envision major improvements in their organizations’ functioning” (George, 2000, p.1040).

Several authors have written about the relationship between emotional intelligence and leadership in adults. According to Nahavandi (2003), “the ability to interact well with followers, satisfy their emotional needs, and motivate and inspire them is another key to effective leadership. Leadership requires successful interaction with others and the ability to motivate them to accomplish goals”(p. 66). “Emotional intelligence (EI), the ability to recognize our own and others’ feelings, is gradually gaining attention in the workforce, in education, and in leadership development”(Martinez, et al., 2004 p. 408). “Further, leadership gurus like John Maxwell are advocating more than ever that understanding and managing of one’s emotional life serves at the heart of leadership and human systems development” (as cited by Lajoie, in Martinez, et al, 2004, p. 408).

According to Cavallo (n.d.), another author that links adult emotional intelligence scores and leadership, “the article [What Makes a Leader], written by Daniel Goleman, spoke to the importance of Emotional Intelligence(EI) in leadership success, and cited in several studies that demonstrating EI is often the distinguishing factor between great leaders and average leaders” (para. 1). This study by Cavallo (n.d.) “revealed a strong relationship between superior performing leaders and emotional competence, supporting theorist’s suggestions that the social, emotional, and relational competency set commonly referred to as Emotional Intelligence, is a distinguishing factor in leadership performance” (para. 7).

Daniel Goleman (1995), in his book *Emotional Intelligence: Why it can matter more than IQ*, discusses several demographic variables that seem to be factors in emotional intelligence such as family situation, gender and functioning in teams. He also feels that emotional intelligence can be taught.

Since publication of 4-H in Century III by the U.S. Department of Agriculture in 1976, 4-H has been challenged to demonstrate that it provides benefits to youth participating in the program” (Astroth, 1996, para. 1). Even though 4-H is known to teach youth all of these things,

there is no accountability to prove that it actually does. Anecdotal evidence is the only accountability available. This is why 4-H is seeing a need to focus on the effectiveness of their Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team. To meet these accountability requirements, documentation of the strengths and weaknesses of the 4-H program need to be made (Boyd, et al., 1992).

Purpose and Hypothesis

The purpose of this research is to find out whether youth who participate on the Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team acquire greater emotional intelligence than those who do not participate on the leadership team. For the purpose of funding, 4-H must show that its projects are effective. If the Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team Members have a higher emotional intelligence than youth that do not participate in Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team program, then there will be evidence of the program's effectiveness. Also, this study will help validate the Mayer Salovey Caruso Emotional Intelligence Test: Youth Version (MSCEIT: YV).

One hypothesis was tested by this study.

- H₁: Mississippi State 4-H Congress attendants who participate on the Mississippi State 4-H Leadership Team will have a higher Emotional Intelligence than Mississippi State 4-H Congress attendants who do not participate on the Mississippi State 4-H Leadership Team.
- H₀: There will be no difference in Emotional Intelligence between Mississippi State 4-H Congress attendants who participate on the Mississippi State 4-H Leadership Team and Mississippi State 4-H Congress attendants who do not participate on the Mississippi State 4-H Leadership Team.

Methods and Procedures

This was an ex post facto study that sought to determine if Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team Members, ages 14-18, had a higher emotional intelligence than 4-H members who are Non-4-H Leadership Team members. The Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team and a sample of Non-4-H Leadership Team members were tested using MSCEIT: YV then compared to see if the Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team Members had a higher score.

The population for this study consisted of 4-H members, 14-18 years of age, who were members of the Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team and attended State 4-H Congress. The 2004-2005 4-H State Leadership Team had 28 members. For the purpose of the study, a convenience sample of 11 non-members of the State 4-H Leadership Team participating at Mississippi 4-H Congress participants attending the assembly held prior to the Campus Workshop at Mississippi 4-H Congress was to serve as the control group.

The dependent variable for this study was the emotional intelligence score of the convenience sample of Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team Members and Non-State 4-H Leadership Team Members, as determined by the MSCEIT: YV. The MSCEIT: YV is an ability based scale that measures how well people perform tasks and solve emotional problems.

The independent variable in this study was membership on the Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team. There were demographic variables that may have affected Emotional Intelligence scores, such as age, grade level in school, and participation in leadership activities other than 4-H. Other demographic variables such as ethnicity, parent's/guardian's education level, and child's living circumstances were given by the parent/guardian. All of these variables were built into the research.

Instrumentation

MSCEIT: YV

For the purpose of this study, two instruments were needed, one instrument to measure emotional intelligence and one instrument to assess demographic variables along with additional leadership experience. The MSCEIT: YV was used to measure emotional intelligence. This 184 item survey is in the process of being validated through this research and others. A consent form for parents to sign was required. In addition to permission for the youth to participate, other demographic information was obtained. This demographic information included age, gender, year in school, who does the child lives with, mother/female guardian education level, father/male guardian education level, and child's living circumstances.

Once the MSCEIT: YV was completed, the score sheets were sent to Multi-Health Systems (MHS) for scoring. The instrument had to be scored by MHS since it is still in the data collection phase. The scores were returned in five weeks with an interpretive guide to explain the scoring process. A total emotional intelligence score was given for each participant. This score is composed of two areas: experiential and strategic. An individual score for each of these areas was given. The experiential score "provides an index of the respondent's ability to perceive emotional information, to relate it to other sensations such as color and taste, and to use it to facilitate thought" (MSCEIT: YV Interpretive GUIDE, para. 2). The strategic score "provides an index of the respondent's ability to understand emotional information and use it strategically for planning and self-management" (MSCEIT: YV Interpretive GUIDE, para. 3). The two areas were broken down into two branches. The two branches of experiential were: perceiving and facilitating/using emotions. The perceiving emotions score "indicates the degree to which the respondent can identify emotion in himself or herself or others" (MSCEIT: YV Interpretive GUIDE, para. 4). The score for facilitating/using thought "indicates the degree to which the respondent can use his or her emotions to improve thinking" (MSCEIT: YV Interpretive GUIDE, para.5). The two branches of the strategic area were: understanding and managing emotions. The understanding emotions branch indicated how well the respondent understands the complexities of emotional meanings, emotional transitions, and emotional situations" (MSCEIT: YV Interpretive GUIDE, para. 6). Managing emotions "registers how well the respondent is able to manage emotions in his or her own life and in the lives of others" (MSCEIT: YV Interpretive GUIDE, para. 7). Each branch is given a score. These scores are added to get the area scores. In turn, the area scores are added to get the total emotional intelligence score. The minimum possible score for all branches was zero. The maximum possible scores for each branch were: Perceiving emotions 88, facilitating/using emotions 101.5, understanding emotions 79.5, and managing emotions 59.5.

Reliability

The MSCEIT: YV is in the data collection stage. There is no reliability information for the instrument. However, the adult version of this instrument has established reliability. The MSCEIT V2.0 is the name of the adult version. Both instruments are scored similarly, and both give a total emotional intelligence score. This score is broken down into two areas: experiential and strategic. The two areas are broken down into two branches. The two branches of experiential are: perceiving and facilitating/using emotions. The two branches of strategic are: understanding and managing emotions. A reliability study was conducted in 2003 on the MSCEIT V2.0. The reliability scores for the general population (those who are not experts of emotions) were as follows: total reliability score was .93, experiential area reliability score was .93, perceiving branch reliability was .91, facilitating/using branch reliability was .79, strategic area reliability was .88, the understanding branch reliability was .80, and the managing branch reliability was .83 (Mayer, et al., 2003). While the reliability scores could give an indication of expected reliability of the youth instrument it can not be assumed.

To assess demographic variables and leadership experience in other organizations, an open ended questionnaire was developed. Information was collected on the number of years, offices, and competitions/activities in which they participated in both 4-H and additional organizations. The youth were then given a cumulative score for each of these three categories: number of years, offices and competitions/activities. These questions were validated for content regarding their appropriateness to the objectives of the study by a faculty panel from the Department of Agriculture Information Science and Education, and Mississippi University Extension Service. After the instruments were reviewed for content validity, approval was received from the University's Office of Regulatory Compliance to conduct this study.

The MSCEIT: YV and the researcher developed instrument were both administered at the 2005 Mississippi 4-H Congress held May 30, 2005 through June 2, 2005. A control group was also tested since the instrument is still in the validation process and does not have an established norm. This study will help establish normative scores for this research instrument.

Data Collection

The MSCEIT: YV consisted of 184 questions that could be completed in 40-50 minutes. The instruments were given to 28 State 4-H Leadership Team members, as well as a convenience sample of 11 4-H youth who did not participate on the State 4-H Leadership Team, who attended Mississippi 4-H Congress.

Prior to Mississippi 4-H Congress all State 4-H Leadership Team Members and Non-Leadership Team Members attending State 4-H Congress, received a letter explaining the study. Enclosed with this letter were an assent form and a consent form. Both of these forms should have been filled out completely and presented at the time the MSCEIT: YV and researcher developed instruments were administered.

The emotional intelligence score sheets were copied and mailed to Multi-Health Systems Inc. for scoring. The data from the researcher developed instrument were entered into SPSS® 11.

After transferring the data into SPSS® 11 from the surveys collected during Mississippi 4-H Congress, descriptive statistics, including mean, frequencies and percentages, were used to summarize the data. Correlations were then run between demographic and the emotional intelligence scores to determine if a relationship existed.

Findings

Demographic data were collected on the 39 participants to describe the 4-H Leadership Team and Non-State 4-H Leadership Team Members who participated in Mississippi 4-H Congress. The participants parents were asked to specify the youth's demographic variables based on given choices. These questions included ethnicity, with whom the youth resides, education level of both parents, and the youth's living circumstances. The youth were asked (a) gender, (b) age, (c) grade in school, (d) number of years they participated in 4-H, (e) if they were on the Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team, (f) were they a Council Officer, (g) on the Awareness Team, or (h) a National 4-H Council Delegate and how long, (i) 4-H projects in which they participated, (j) number of years they participated in each project, and (k) if they participated in other 4-H activities.

Seventy-three percent, or 28 members, of the participants were female. Of those 28, 20 were on the leadership team. A majority of the participants, 27, were White/Caucasian. Seventy-two percent of the participants were on the leadership team. A greater part, 77%, of the population participated in other leadership organizations.

“Home demographics” such as who the child resides with, guardian education level and child's living circumstances were also studied. These respondents were given several options from which to choose. All categories were self explanatory with the exception of living circumstances, which were defined as follows:

- High- Highly desirable accommodations, neighborhood is quiet and very well maintained, and income/financial status easily covers basic needs as well as many luxuries.
- Medium- Living accommodations are acceptable, neighborhood is moderately quiet and maintained, and income/financial status adequate to meet needs.
- Low- Living accommodations are undesirable, neighborhood is noisy and poorly maintained, and income/financial status limit ability to obtain basic necessities.

A majority (73%) of the participants live with both parents, and consider living arrangements to be medium-high. Most mother's/female guardian's education was at the community/two year degree level. The majority of the father/male guardian education level was Junior or 4-year College or better. These numbers are higher than the state averages for these demographics.

Other demographic variables were also studied. The average Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team Member's age was 17 and an average Non-State 4-H Leadership Team Member's age was 15. The average number of 4-H projects that all members participated in was two. The Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team Member average was three and Non-State 4-H Leadership Team was one. The average number of cumulative years in 4-H projects was 11 (e.g. if the youth showed horses for three years, showed cows for two years, and competed in archery for five years, their cumulative years would be ten), the State 4-H Leadership Team's average was 14 years, and the Non-State 4-H Leadership Team's average was 3 years. Average participation in other leadership activities was 5 years. The overall average number of activities/competitions in other leadership organizations was one. The average was two for the Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team, and zero for Non-State 4-H Leadership Team.

Both groups were also asked their last completed grade in school. The range was 8th grade completion to 12th grade completion. The largest part, 48.7%, of participants had completed the 12th grade.

Twenty-eight Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team members participated in the study. Thirty-six percent of the Leadership Team indicated that they spent one year on the Awareness Team. Also, the majority (85.7%) of the group had not been a Mississippi 4-H Council Officer or a National 4-H Conference Delegate (71.4%).

Descriptive statistics were used to analyze the frequency of offices held in other organizations. A majority of the youth participating in the study indicated they did not hold an office in any other organization.

Multi-Health Systems scored the emotional intelligence instruments. Scores were returned via e-mail, as a raw data set, with an interpretation guide. An overall emotional intelligence score was given, which was made up of two area scores. Each area score was made up of two branch scores. Table 1 indicates the overall, area and branch means of the Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team and Non-State 4-H Leadership Team Members. Because no normative scores are available, only raw scores are reported in the study. There were two participants in the study that did not complete the instrument.

As the hypothesis stated, Mississippi 4-H Congress attendants who participate on the State 4-H Leadership Team will have a higher emotional intelligence than Mississippi 4-H Congress attendants who do not participate on the State 4-H Leadership Team. The emotional intelligence scores were entered into SPSS where a t-test was conducted to check for statistical significance between emotional intelligence scores and membership on the Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team. An *a priori alpha* level of .05 ($p < .05$) was used due the small sample size. There were no statistically significant differences found in any of the branches, areas or total scores. The hypothesis was rejected and the null hypothesis was accepted.

ANOVA's were calculated to determine if selected demographic variables were intervening with statistical significance of emotional intelligence scores between the Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team and Non-State 4-H Leadership Team groups. There were no statistically

significant differences between these demographic variables and emotional intelligence scores between the two groups.

Table 1.

Emotional Intelligence Scores Mississippi 4-H Congress Participants (N=37)

Emotional Intelligence Score	State 4-H Leadership Team (N=26)	Non-State 4-H Leadership Team (N=11)
Perceiving Emotions	64	64
Facilitating Thought	62	61
Experiential Emotional Intelligence Score	126	125
Understanding Emotions	61	58
Managing Emotions	39	39
Strategic Emotional Intelligence Score	100	98
Total MSCEIT: YV Score	226	223

Correlations were calculated on the remaining demographic variables to determine if there were statistically significant differences among emotional intelligence scores between the Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team and Non-State 4-H Leadership Team. There were no statistically significant differences found among any of the emotional intelligence scores and demographic variables.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Emotional intelligence scores for both groups were tested to determine if there was a statistically significance difference. After analyzing the scores, there were no statistically significant differences found between the two groups. The small numbers in this study make strong conclusions impossible. Since the instrument is still in the research process and has no normative score, there were no other comparative scores other than the Non-Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team. This particular study, with a small population and small control group, found no differences between the emotional intelligence scores of the Mississippi 4-H Leadership Team and Non-State 4-H Leadership Team Members. The antidotal evidence of the effectiveness of the 4-H Leadership Team is strong and the study in no way discounts the importance of the program to leadership development among the state's youth. This study was an attempt to use and help validate an instrument that might be used in the future.

This study was conducted for the purposes of helping provide normative youth emotional intelligence scores for the MSCEIT: YV and for the validation of leadership programs. Taking the findings into consideration, several recommendations were made for further research on this topic.

The following recommendations were made based on the findings of this study:

1. The study should be repeated when the MSCEIT: YV instrument has established normative scores. These normative scores could have a valuable impact on youth leadership programs by having an instrument to measure the influence of leadership programs on youth. Youth development specialists could use emotional intelligence literature to help develop their programs.
2. Other programs such as the National FFA Organization's new Life Knowledge Curriculum may use emotional intelligence scores as an additional area of research.
3. This study should be conducted again with a larger sample. Statistically the sample size was too small for advanced statistics causing empty cells. Using a larger sample would better justify the use of inferential statistics.
4. The MSCEIT: YV should be used in a Pre/Post test design of a formal leadership program study. The instrument might also be used in an experimental design using all senior 4-H members.

The researchers chose to use the MSCEI:YV for two reasons. The first reason was cost all previously validated instruments would charge \$30-\$50 per participant for the instrument and scoring. The second reason was the desire to participate in the development of a new instrument for future use. The only way standardized instruments can be developed is if individuals are willing to take a chance and help with the process.

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