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MICHIGAN YOUTH COUNCILS

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**ENGAGING YOUTH IN COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING:
MICHIGAN YOUTH COUNCILS**

By

Ellen Rinck

A THESIS

**Submitted to
Michigan State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of**

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Department of Park, Recreation and Tourism Resources

2006

ABSTRACT

ENGAGING YOUTH IN COMMUNITY DECISION-MAKING: MICHIGAN YOUTH COUNCILS

By

Ellen Rinck

This study is a cross-sectional examination of the experiences and perceived outcomes of youth members and adult mentors engaged in youth council groups located throughout the state of Michigan. A total of 72 youth members and 34 adult mentors completed a survey, representing a total of 33 youth council groups. Youth and adults in this study reported that youth members are gaining skills and experiences through their participation in youth council groups that will assist them in becoming productive and successful adult citizens. It was found that some elements in a young person's personal life, such as strong parental support, and in their youth council experiences, such as strong adult mentor support and positive youth council climate, are likely to enhance resulting individual and community outcomes. Recommendations are provided for organizers of youth council programs.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The structure of American communities has undergone significant transformations since the arrival of the industrial revolution and the subsequent increased importance of formal schooling for occupational success (Larson, 2002; Irby and Tolman, 2002). In particular, American youth are no longer expected to help sustain the economic and social vitality of their communities by working alongside adults, but rather have assumed such roles as student, style setter and consumer (Zeldin, Camino and Calvert, 2003). Along with this change, has come a considerable increase in leisure time (Irby and Tolman, 2002) and a prolonged period of time in which youth are biologically mature but not yet able to assume adult roles (HHS, 1997; Larson, Wilson and Mortimer, 2002; Chalk and Phillips, 1996).

Today, it is estimated that approximately fifty percent of an American adolescent's time can be classified as leisure, or as free and without obligation (Caldwell and Baldwin, 2003; Irby and Tolman, 2002). Social scientists, public policy makers, law enforcement officials and others have framed youth leisure time primarily as a period in which problems and crises, such as substance abuse, violence and sexual activity, occur. Accordingly, scholars and practitioners in the field of youth development have dedicated their efforts to provide community-based programs that help to reduce youth participation in risky behaviors.

Central to the current efforts of implementing effective youth development programs is the initiative “to include the voice, ideas, and experiences of young people at the tables where important decisions are made” (Zeldin et al., 2000, p.1). Community leaders and youth advocates have begun to establish youth advisory councils, through which groups of young people express their views and concerns through discussion and action at the top levels of local government (Huber et al., 2003).

Study Framework

The framework for this study is based on several youth engagement frameworks and resources developed by scholars and community leaders who work with youth councils around the globe. These include the United Kingdom's National Foundation for Education Research's *Citizenship Education Longitudinal Study* (NFER-CELS) (Kerr et al., 2004), the United Kingdom's *Hear by Right* standards and tools published by the Local Government Association and the National Youth Agency for the Better Government with Young People Initiative (Wade, Lawton and Stevenson, 2001) and New Zealand's resource guide for involving young people in accordance with their *Agenda for Children and Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa* (Taiohi, 2003). It is suggested by each of these frameworks that successful youth engagement in decision-making is a complex process consisting of influential factors from many community domains.

Study Purpose

As a result of the relatively recent inclusion of youth as decision-making partners and the following acceptance of youth councils as useful in community youth development, few studies have investigated the backgrounds, experiences and outcomes of youth and adult mentors involved in youth councils. Therefore, **this** study explores youth councils in the state of Michigan as effective community youth development programs. Its purpose is threefold:

1. Conduct a literature review of youth development and civic engagement studies to identify theoretical constructs that describe factors influencing engagement and positive youth development outcomes, and to develop items that could be used to measure those constructs.
2. Test the factor structure of the theoretical constructs and the reliability of items used to measure youth council member and adult mentor backgrounds, experiences and outcomes (including individual and community outcomes).
3. Examine if youth member ratings of background and experience factors varied by cluster membership (high- and low-rating) by exploring the following questions:
 - a. Do youth member ratings of mentor/organization background characteristics differ between high- and low-rating clusters for both individual and community outcome factors?

- b. Do youth member ratings of youth council experiences differ between high- and low- rating clusters for both individual and community outcome factors?

Definitions

Adolescence: A developmental period in which individuals between the years of 11 and 21 are no longer children but not yet recognized as adults by American society (HHS, 1997; Zeldin et al., 2000).

Cluster Analysis: “An exploratory data analysis tool which aims at sorting different objects into groups in a way that the degree of association between two objects is maximal if they belong to the same group and minimal otherwise” (StatSoft, Inc, 2006, p. 1).

Community: “People who live within a geographically defined area and who have social and psychological ties with each other and with the place where they live” (Mattessich, Monsey and Roy, 1997, p. 6).

Community Youth Development: Community youth development is the intentional creation of environments that “provide constructive, affirmative and encouraging relationships that are sustained over time with adults that enable youth to build their competencies and become engaged as partners in their own development as well as the development of their communities” (Perkins et al., 2003, p. 6).

Decision-Making: Decision-making “refers to those situations where youth work-often in partnership with adults- to set the overall policy direction of organizations, institutions, and coalitions. Youth decisions may be

administrative (e.g., hiring staff, designing programs, or conducting needs assessments) or operational (e.g., leading youth groups or training volunteers.) These terms often refer to young people working on boards of directors, sanctioned committees, planning bodies, and advisory groups” (Zeldin et al., 2000, p. 3).

Engagement: Although Hart (1992) and other scholars use the term *participation*, the term *engagement* will be used for the purposes of this paper to describe the active involvement of youth in community decision-making. *Participation* will be used to refer to the involvement of youth in other out-of-school activities, such as sports, clubs and after-school programs.

Factor Analysis: An exploratory data analysis tool that can be used for a variety of purposes, including revealing patterns of interrelationships among variables, detecting clusters of strongly intercorrelated variables and reducing a large number of variables to a smaller number of uncorrelated variables (or factors) (Agresti and Finlay, 1997).

Youth: For the purposes of this paper, the terms *youth*, *adolescents* and *young people* will be used synonymously to describe individuals between the ages of 11 and 21.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

This chapter provides an overview of the literature surrounding positive youth development and the role that youth engagement plays in youth development practices in the twenty-first century. In addition, this chapter presents an in-depth examination of research addressing the backgrounds, experiences and outcomes associated with the practice of engaging youth in community decision-making.

Youth Development in Context

For the past century, social scientists, public policymakers, human service providers, law enforcement officials, the media and the general public have focused a great deal of attention on the development of youth in contemporary societies (U.S. Department of Health and Human Services (HHS), 1997; Checkoway et al., 2003). Local media, for example, often report on youth problems and adults commonly voice their mistrust of young people (Driskell, 2002; Irby and Tolman, 2002). Similarly, the scientific study of youth development has traditionally focused on explaining, predicting and improving problem behaviors (Eccles et al., 1993; Chalk and Phillips, 1996; Steinberg and Morris, 2001; Irby and Tolman, 2002). Consequently, youth have been regularly viewed to be the source of diverse social problems in the United States (HHS, 1997; Pittman et al., 2001).

Human development, however, is a process of interactions between an individual and the ecological contexts with which they are connected (HHS, 1997;

Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998; Lerner and Galambos, 1998; Roth and Brooks-Gunn, 2000). In other words, social problems such as substance abuse, crime, violence and teen parenthood do not result merely from the arbitrary actions of youth, alone (HHS, 1997; Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998; Lerner and Galambos, 1998).

Since the mid 1980s, scholars have begun to recognize that the development of youth into adulthood is a complex process involving multiple levels of interactions between individuals and their physical and social contexts (Eccles et al., 1993; HHS, 1997; Bronfenbrenner and Morris, 1998; Lerner and Galambos, 1998; Steinberg and Morris, 2001). These continual and changing interactions underlie both positive and negative outcomes that occur as a result of the developmental process (Lerner and Galambos, 1998). In a report by HHS (1997), aspects of these physical and social contexts that were found to enhance or weaken an individual's development into adulthood are historical time and place as well as society, community, family, peers and the biophysical characteristics of the individual themselves. The subsequent discussion will explore the following ecological contexts for youth development: community, family and individual biophysical characteristics.

Community

In the postindustrial United States, adolescents are experiencing shifting community characteristics that require the capacity to traverse through increasingly diverse social worlds. Specifically, youth are encountering new societal roles, varying cultural backgrounds, a changing family structure (Larson,

Wilson and Mortimer, 2002) and a considerable amount of leisure time (Irby and Tolman, 2002).

Cultural Backgrounds. In 2003 the Federal Interagency Forum on Child and Family Statistics (FIFCFS) reported that the diversity of the language and cultural backgrounds of youth growing up in the United States has drastically increased in the past thirty years due largely to the great number of foreign-born individuals of the past generation. For example, in 1999 it is estimated that 2.6 million school-age children (5-17 years old) who spoke a language other than English at home also had difficulty speaking English, twice the number of youth in 1979 (1.3 million) (FIFCFS, 2003).

Family Structure. The United States, along with other industrialized nations, is experiencing a dramatic shift in family norms, resulting in heightened divorce rates, growing numbers of female-headed households and a general increase in the diversity of family forms (Larson, Wilson and Mortimer, 2002). Consequently, American households are more likely to be transitory in nature than in the past, adding to the importance that youth acquire the skills to navigate through increasingly changing and diverse social worlds (Larson, Wilson and Mortimer, 2002). Scholars have observed that youth residing in single-parent households, especially those headed by females, are more likely to be living near or below the poverty line (U.S. Census Bureau, 1997; National Institute for Out-of-School Time (NIOST), 2003) and to be spending more time unsupervised (NIOST, 2003) than youth living with married parents. In fact, NIOST reports that young people living in female-headed households are nearly five times as likely

as young people living in households headed by married parents to be living in poverty (39% versus 8%) (2003).

Leisure Time. There is an abundance of statistical evidence suggesting that many youth are participating in risk behaviors during their leisure, or out-of-school times. Participation in risk behaviors such as sexual activity, substance abuse, and violent acts is widespread, especially among youth who spend their discretionary time without adult supervision (NIOST, 2000). For example, approximately 65-70% of all American teens report being sexually active by the end of their high school career, placing them at risk for developing Sexually Transmitted Diseases (STD's), experiencing a pregnancy or becoming a young parent (Futris and McDowell, 2002). The United States encounters the highest teen pregnancy rate among western industrialized nations (Futris and McDowell, 2002). Furthermore, over half (53%) of adolescents have tried an illicit drug, more than half (57%) of young people have tried cigarettes and nearly four out of five (78%) have consumed alcohol by the end of their twelfth grade school year (Monitoring the Future, 2003). In addition, roughly 20% of juvenile crimes are committed after school ends, between the afternoon hours of four and seven, when many youth spend their leisure time unsupervised (Bilchik, 1999).

Family

The family is generally viewed by researchers as being the principle context in which human development takes place (Bronfenbrenner, 1986; HHS, 1997; Steinberg and Morris, 2001; Larson, Wilson and Mortimer, 2002). Among the aspects of the family context found to influence development during

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adolescence, is the quality of parent-child relationships (HHS, 1997). During adolescence, parent-youth relationships are commonly described as undergoing a period of mild conflict in which there is a decline in reported closeness and in the amount of time youth and parents spend together (Eccles et al., 1993; Steinberg and Morris, 2001). The process of adolescent individuation, or the striving for autonomy, is commonly attributed to these changes (HHS, 1997; Steinberg and Morris, 2001). This process is described by the United States HHS as a period of time in which adolescents “strive to develop a sense of self that is separate from parents while at the same time remaining connected to parents as sources of emotional support, empathy and practical advice” (1997, p. 16).

Biophysical Characteristics.

In recent years Americans have become increasingly concerned with the physical and mental well-being of our nation's youth. In every community and every school across the nation, regardless of income, racial, ethnic or religious group, children suffer from emotional, behavioral and mental disorders (Children's Defense Fund, 2004). In the United States Surgeon General's 1999 report (HHS, 1999), it is indicated that as many as 21% of American children ages 9 to 17 years old have a diagnosable mental or addictive disorder that affects their level of functioning at home, in school and in their communities. Likewise, the percentage of overweight adolescents has increased among all racial/ethnic and gender groups over the last three decades (Child Trends, 1999). Current estimates suggest that at least 20% of American youth are

overweight. Half of these individuals are adolescents and an additional 14% of adolescents are at risk for becoming overweight (Fulton et. al., 2001).

Role of Engagement in Youth Development

Just over a decade ago the professional field of youth development underwent a paradigm shift, moving away from a deficit-based approach where researchers and practitioners focused on the prevention of youth problem behaviors, to building on the assets of youth through learning, serving and participating within communities (Pittman et al., 2001; Grantmakers for Children, Youth and Families' (GCYF), 2003; Wheeler, 2003). Practitioners and researchers Karen Pittman and Michele Cahill call this approach positive youth development, and add that "problem-free isn't fully prepared" (GCYF, 2003; Wheeler, 2003). In other words, simply removing problem behaviors from the life of a young person, as in the deficit-based approach, does not promote the development of skills needed to navigate adulthood successfully.

The paradigm shift has not stopped here, however. The contention that "fully prepared isn't fully engaged" is the researchers' phrase that now fuels the movement of community youth development, in which youth are viewed as more than community assets; they are valued as community leaders (Pittman et al., 2001; GCYF, 2003; Perkins et al., 2003). Youth development professionals and policy makers have "begun to focus on youth in an effort to ensure that the next generation of young people will reach adulthood prepared to be productive workers, effective parents and responsible citizens" (Huber et al., 2003, p. 316).

Strong empirical evidence suggests that engaging youth in community decision-making is beneficial for a young person's successful development into adulthood (Zeldin et al., 2000). Community leaders and youth advocates have begun to establish youth advisory councils, in which a group of young people express their views and concerns through discussion and action at the top levels of local government (Huber et al., 2003).

Youth Engagement

According to Hart (1992), community engagement is the fundamental right of all citizens, regardless of ethnic origin, religion, sexual orientation or age. He asserts that engagement is the groundwork upon which a democracy is built and its presence and strength are standards with which a democracy should be assessed (Hart, 1992). Scholars define youth engagement as the sharing of decisions that affect a young person's life and the well-being of others (Zeldin et al., 2000; Driskell, 2002). As Kretzmann and McKnight discuss in *Building Communities From the Inside Out*, the engagement of youth may benefit numerous sectors of their communities, including local institutions (businesses and schools), citizens' associations (churches and cultural groups) and individuals (all ages and abilities) (1993). The authors explain that youth should be engaged in developing solutions to address community issues (Kretzmann and McKnight, 1993).

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Study Framework

The framework for this study is based on several youth engagement frameworks and resources developed by scholars and community leaders who work with youth councils around the globe. This study is largely centered on the work of the United Kingdom's NFER-CELS, a national longitudinal study of citizenship education in schools in England (2004). Even though NFER-CELS centers on the education of citizenship in schools, much of the literature used in its development is also relevant to citizenship education in the wider community (Kerr et al, 2004).

The framework for this study also incorporates a great deal of the United Kingdom's *Hear by Right* standards and tools published by the Local Government Association and the National Youth Agency for the Better Government with Young People Initiative (2001). The standards framework is based on the Seven S Model of organizational change, including shared values, strategy, structures, systems, staff, elected members or trustees, skills and knowledge and style of leadership. In addition, this study integrates New Zealand's resource guide for involving young people in accordance with their *Agenda for Children and Youth Development Strategy Aotearoa* (Taiohi, 2003). This resource guide was established as a set of principles to guide decision-making, a new way of developing child policies and services and a government action plan (Taiohi, 2003).

The results of the United Kingdom's NFER-CELS questionnaire and related case studies demonstrate that the development of citizenship

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engagement skills does not result from one prominent factor. Rather, it results from a complex mix of factors, influences and individuals (Kerr et al., 2004). The United Kingdom's *Hear by Right* standards framework and tools, New Zealand's resource guide for involving young people and Parra et al.'s Mentoring Model also describe successful youth engagement in decision-making as a process consisting of influential factors from many community domains.

After conducting an in-depth review of these frameworks and resources as well as other relevant literature, three emerging focus areas and three community domains were identified for use in this study. The three focus areas include: 1) background factors, such as previous involvement in community programs, that affect if and why a young person may get involved in community decision-making; 2) processes, such as the quality of the youth – adult mentor relationship, that determine to what extent a youth's engagement in decision-making is beneficial and 3) outcomes, such as increased proficiency in civic skills, that assist youth in transitioning successfully into adulthood. The three community domains include: 1) the youth as an individual; 2) adult mentors and organizations; and 3) the wider community. The proceeding review explores the following: youth background factors, mentor/organizational background factors, civic engagement experiences, youth outcomes, mentor/organizational outcomes and community outcomes.

Youth Background Factors

The impact of youth engagement is either amplified or dampened by what else is going on in young people's lives (Pittman et al., 2001). The personal

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demographic and background characteristics of youth may influence the developmental outcomes experienced by them (Parra et al., 2002). In *Making Citizenship Education Real*, Kerr et al. (2004) recognize that students are influenced by a range of background factors, including attributes that may be influenced by involvement in civic activities (i.e. efficacy and beliefs, grades earned in school) and those that cannot necessarily be influenced by participation in citizenship education (i.e. age, sex and ethnicity). The following discussion reviews these background factors affecting youth: demographics, process of getting involved and family influence and support.

Demographics. Scholars have indicated that youth who are engaged in their communities tend to be members of homogeneous sociodemographic groups. In particular, some research suggests that females more commonly participate in community service activities than males (Flanagan et al., 1998). Data from the Monitoring the Future study suggest that Caucasian American youth are more apt to vote and to volunteer in their communities than either African American or Hispanic American youth (Johnston, Bachman and O'Malley, 1999). Additionally, results from the Maryland Adolescent Development in Context (MADIC) longitudinal study demonstrate an association between socioeconomic status and youth citizenship engagement (Zaff et al., 2003a). It is common for youth living in economically stable households to have a higher rate of participation in community decision-making than those from low-income households (Hart, 1992).

Process of Getting Involved. There are a variety of background factors influencing whether a young person may become involved in community decision-making. These include personal motivations (i.e. desire to contribute to their community or to meet new people), personal networks (i.e. an adult invited them to participate or peers elected them to represent their ideas), personal experiences (i.e. previous involvement in a community organization) and organization/government policies or beliefs (i.e. committed to providing youth with positive developmental experiences or to establish a good level of practice).

Family Influence and Support. A young person's family experiences will affect their community involvement behavior for life (Jalandoni and Hume, 2001). Jacquelynne Eccles, a psychology, education and women's studies professor at the University of Michigan suggests that adolescents often share their parents' views on important social issues such as morality, educational goals, politics and religion (1999). Scholars have also reported that the community involvement activities of a young person's parents are a significant predictor of their child's own engagement in community youth groups and the strongest predictor of their own future community and civic engagement during early to middle adulthood (Chan and Elder, 2001). For example, data from the MADIC longitudinal study demonstrate that parent modeling of citizenship behaviors was significantly associated with positive citizenship engagement among youth (Zaff et al., 2003a).

In their study of fifteen agencies that engage youth in decision-making throughout the United States, Zeldin et al. found that the most qualified youth,

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based on their skills, commitment and connections, are being asked to join adults at the decision-making table (2000). Such a report suggests that youth who are not recognized as having excelled in school and other community realms may be underrepresented in youth council groups. In fact, those youth most underrepresented may be the individuals who benefit most from engagement in groups like youth councils. For example, in the NFER-CELS some teachers responded that they believe citizenship education prepared youth who did not excel in school with more useful skills than other, more traditional academic subjects (Kerr et al., 2004).

Mentor/Organizational Background Factors.

Mentor Training and Support. In *Intersection of Youth and Community Programs*, Huber et al. (2003) list adult training as an important support for adults partnering with youth in community decision-making. Similarly, Parra et al. (2002) found that perceived quality of adult mentor training and support was a positive predictor of mentor efficacy in their study of the mentoring relationships in a Big Brothers/Big Sisters program. It appeared that even the limited training mentors received prior to beginning their mentoring relationship assisted in fostering a greater sense of effectiveness for engaging in successful relationship building activities with youth (Parra et al., 2002). In the NFER-CELS, it was found that those organizations that recognized the need for staff training and development in building confidence and improving teaching and learning strategies were the most successful in the development of citizenship education (Kerr et al., 2004). Not only is initial training critical to developing mentor efficacy, but ongoing

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availability of staff support is most likely needed to sustain high levels of mentor effectiveness (Parra et al., 2002).

Mentor Efficacy and Beliefs. The mentor's level of confidence and associated skills and knowledge have a great impact on the ability to establish a positive relationship with youth (Parra et al., 2002). High levels of self efficacy among adult mentors help to ensure desired outcomes in adult-youth relationships (Parra et al., 2002). In the NFER-CELS, it was found that those staff who were confident and enthusiastic were more likely to develop effective practice and spread that enthusiasm to other staff members, students and community representatives (Kerr et al., 2004). Even though the attitudes and actions of adult leaders are not the only factors influencing the success of citizenship education, they are vital components (Kerr et al., 2004).

It is also critical that the adult coordinator is respected and has the institutional power and authority in the organization to advocate for youth participation in decision-making (Zeldin et al., 2000; Kerr et al., 2004). This is especially important for initial change processes in which traditional management structures and stereotypic views about young people must be overcome (Zeldin et al., 2000).

Organizational Culture. There are numerous reasons why an organization or local government may involve youth in decision-making. In particular, many organizations may invest in the engagement of youth in decision-making because this involvement will be beneficial in providing programs and activities and in making organization and community changes that consider the needs of

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local youth (Huber et al., 2003). In addition, including youth in decision-making often brings a fresh perspective on the way services should be delivered, on policies and on democratic processes (Wade, Lawton and Stevenson, 2001).

Mentor Demographics. Parra et al. report that although much attention is focused on the matching of youth and adult mentors by gender and race/ethnicity when planning for positive youth outcomes, the relationship between demographics and outcomes are theoretically mediated by linkages with more process-oriented association measures (2002). More specifically, in their study of mentoring relationships in a Big Brothers/Big Sister program, Parra et al. (2002) found that mentor age was the only demographic characteristic that demonstrated significant zero-order associations with other research factors. The results of this study show that mentor age was negatively associated with both mentor efficacy ($p < .05$) and perceived benefits reported by youth ($p < .01$).

Civic Engagement Experiences

Youth Community Involvement. From their interviews with fifteen organizations engaging youth in decision-making in the United States, Zeldin et al. (2000) found that almost all of the young people who were involved in governance roles shared a history of being participants and volunteers in community organizations. The majority of youth were selected from among organization program participants (Zeldin et al., 2000).

Community Supports for Youth Engagement. In the United Kingdom's NFER-CELS, it was found that community lack of awareness of youth council accomplishments and a general belief among community leaders that youth

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councils were ineffective discouraged youth from voicing their opinions and contributing to the organization (Kerr et al., 2004). In the NFER-CELS, it was reported that the development and success of citizenship education was influenced by the amount of senior management support through their active involvement in planning and delivering programs (2004). Similarly, Zeldin et al. concluded that the facilitation of positive outcomes will most likely be successful if the top decision-making body in the organization is committed to youth-adult partnerships (Zeldin et al., 2000). In addition, adult openness to and respect for student opinions have been named as key factors in a youth's sense of belonging to and participation in their school or organization (Camino and Zeldin, 2002b; Kerr et al., 2004). Beyond the opportunity to voice their opinions, students value the responses and actions taken as a result of their contributions (Kerr et al., 2004).

In *Intersection of Youth and Community Programs*, Huber et al. list youth training as important in fostering youth engagement in decision-making in their communities (2003). It is critical that youth develop the skills they need to be successful in their decision-making roles (i.e. reading budgets and working on committees) (Huber et al., 2003).

Mentor/Youth Contact. It is well recognized that the promotion of positive academic and social behaviors among youth may result from the amount of time adults in their communities (i.e. family members, friends, community leaders, teachers) invest in their development (Scales et al., 2000). Parra et al. establish in their study of mentoring relationships that a regular and consistent pattern of

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contact between youth and adult mentors is vital enough to be considered a precondition to the development of close bonds between mentors and youth (2002).

Relationship Experiences. In NFER-CELS, it was found that schools appeared to be most successful in developing citizenship education where there were positive interactions at different levels throughout the process. Specifically, this included positive interactions amid adults, among youth, between adults and youth and with the youth council and the wider community (Kerr et al., 2004).

Extracurricular Activities. Youth councils are not the only environments in which young people have the opportunity to develop civic skills. Other common contexts include the family and home, work and leisure places, formal community environments such as religious, cultural and voluntary groups and even via the internet through email and chat rooms (Flanagan and Van Horn, 2003; Kerr et al., 2004). The results of longitudinal studies have demonstrated that youth participation in extracurricular activities in high school results in a greater likelihood of voting and volunteering in young adulthood (Zaff et al., 2003b). Constance Flanagan and Beth Van Horn (2003), youth development researchers at the Pennsylvania State University, state that a relationship exists between youth involvement in extracurricular activities, such as student government, service, artistic or religious clubs, and adult involvement in community associations, such as educational agencies, youth groups and faith-based organizations. In turn, membership in these civic, community and religious

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organizations decreased adult alienation from the political world and increased the chance that they would vote (Flanagan and Van Horn, 2003).

Adult Perceptions. As previously mentioned, youth are frequently excluded from participating in decision-making roles because of adult skepticism (Driskell, 2002; Hart, 1992; Zeldin et al., 2000; Huber et al., 2003). Adults sometimes feel that partnering with young people will compromise their decision-making authority or add complexity to their jobs (Driskell, 2002). In addition, adults often underestimate the capabilities of youth (Hart, 1992; Huber et al., 2003) and their desire to become involved in community decision-making roles (Huber et al., 2003). Concerns about youths' ability to make sound decisions, to follow through with their duties and to deal with sensitive or confidential issues are common among adults who oppose the involvement of youth (Huber et al., 2003). However, the work of youth development scholars has shown that youth have good decision-making and comprehension skills by nine years old, and that these skills are comparable to adults' by age 14 or 16 years old (Huber, 2003).

In the NFER-CELS, it was found that the negative stereotypes of young people upheld by community members sometimes limited the extent to which youth were comfortable in participating in the local community (Kerr et al., 2004). In such situations, it is not only youth who miss the opportunity to be engaged in decision-making, but communities themselves are left at a disadvantage (Zeldin et al., 2000). A community cannot reach an optimal existence if a major portion of its population is being left out (Zeldin et al., 2000).

Structural Barriers. Community meetings usually convene during the weekday while youth are in school. It is very difficult for youth to leave school grounds to attend a meeting and school policies often prohibit communication with students (Huber et al., 2003). In addition, organizational budgets have traditionally not been designed to include youth regularly (Huber et al., 2003). Therefore, the funding to support youth engagement in decision-making and the implementation of their resulting recommendations is most likely limited (Driskell, 2002).

The legal ability of youth to participate in decision-making opportunities within organizations, such as assuming roles as voting members and signing contracts, varies from state to state (Huber et al., 2003). Similarly, organizational bylaws are not designed to include youth. Thus, it may be necessary to for an organization to revise its bylaws to allow youth to be legitimate voting members on boards and committees (Huber et al., 2003).

Youth Outcomes

In a model created by Gambone and Connell, called the Community Action Framework for Youth Development, the improvement of long-term outcomes in adulthood is established as the ultimate goal of community-based youth development initiatives (Gambone, Klem and Connell, 2002). The framework identifies three long-term outcomes to be experienced in adulthood: 1) economic self-sufficiency; 2) healthy family and social relationships and 3) community involvement (Gambone, Klem and Connell, 2002). Improvements in these long-term outcomes are facilitated by improvements in developmental

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outcomes such as establishing basic life skills, making positive connections with adults and learning to make healthy choices (Gambone, Klem and Connell, 2002). The following discussion explores these and other developmental outcomes.

Membership and Belonging. Engagement in community decision-making is linked to the building of positive relationships with both peers and adults (GCYF, 2003). In fact, the benefits of citizenship education that were most often mentioned by teachers and school leaders in the NFER-CELS were related to the development of students (Kerr et al., 2004). Developmental benefits included the improvement of tolerance/respect/relationships and social and moral behaviors and the development of the school as a community (Kerr et al., 2004).

Civic Skills and Community Involvement. Common experiences in community decision-making such as facilitating meetings and researching community issues help to build youths' social, cultural and civic competencies (GCYF, 2003). For instance, some research has indicated that engagement in community decision-making results in a greater understanding of equality and discrimination issues such as racism and disability awareness (Kirby and Bryson, 2002). It has also been found that young people develop decision-making, communication and budgeting skills (Kirby and Bryson, 2002). For example, teachers and school leaders in the NFER-CELS credited students' increase in awareness of community or current affairs, participation (political, in school and in the community) and in their ability to make informed decisions/think critically to

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their experiences in the schools' citizenship education programs (Kerr et al., 2004).

Self Worth, Responsibility and Autonomy. In recent evaluations of youth in community decision-making programs, it has been found that when youth are treated as valuable community resources, they build resiliency and other protective factors associated with healthy adolescence (Zeldin, 2004). For example, youth outcomes that are associated with positive youth-adult mentor relationships include gains in self-esteem and self-confidence and increases in academic achievement (Kirby and Bryson, 2002; Parra et al., 2002). As youth council members begin to realize that they are valued by their peers and by community leaders as productive and successful citizens, they often experience a gain in self-esteem and self-confidence (Wade, Lawton and Stevenson, 2001; GCYF, 2003; Huber et al., 2003). Similarly, it was observed by teachers and school leaders in the NFER-CELS that involvement in citizenship education fostered a sense of empowerment and value among students (Kerr et al., 2004).

Mentor/Organizational Outcomes

Engaging youth in their communities, an important component of the community youth development process, not only benefits youth outcomes, but benefits adults and organizations as well. Adults who are involved in the engagement of and decision-making by youth in their communities are able to experience the competence of youth first-hand, feel more commitment to and energy from the organization, feel more effective and more confident in relating to youth, better understand youth programming needs and are more connected

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to the community (Zeldin et al., 2000; Huber et al., 2003). For organizations as a whole, they are more connected and responsive to youth in the community, value inclusion and representation, help convince funding agencies that the organization is serious about promoting youth development and reach out to the community more (Zeldin et al., 2000; Huber et al., 2003). The “mutual contributions of youth and adults can result in a synergy, a new power, and energy that propels decision-making groups to greater innovation and productivity” (Huber et al., 2003, p. 304).

Community Outcomes

Presently, community outcomes resulting from youth engagement in decision-making are just beginning to be explored because of the relatively recent adoption of youth as partners (Zeldin et al., 2000). However, several scholars have begun investigating potential community outcomes. Specifically, Huber et al. (2003) convey that community investments of time, energy and money into the positive development of youth also serve as investments in the quality of life for all residents.

The engagement of youth in decision-making may enable the community to see youth as resources instead of liabilities (Flanagan and Van Horn, 2003). The very same dedication of resources that help youth to become productive citizens, also help to kindle economic growth and attract businesses (Huber et al., 2003). For example, as youth advance their education, skills and assets through community engagement opportunities, they will help to build human capital within the community when they become adults (Huber et al., 2003).

Instead of exhausting community resources as unemployed or incarcerated citizens, youth will add to the local economy, serve as community leaders and help to develop community stability (Huber et al., 2003). The presence of successful youth programs, alongside quality education and the opportunity for cultural enrichment have been named as valued features by companies searching for a place to establish their businesses (Huber et al., 2003). Such vibrant communities help to ensure that their employees and their families will enjoy a high quality of life (Huber et al., 2003). The addition of businesses will, in turn, cultivate more fiscal growth and help communities become more economically competitive (Huber et al., 2003).

Summary

In summary, social problems are often presented as justification for the failure of some youth to become productive and successful members of adult society (HHS, 1997). It cannot be denied that the presence of such social problems as substance abuse, crime, violence, teen pregnancy, obesity, unstable mental health and sexually transmitted diseases are widespread. It is not as often expressed, however, that such social quandaries result from intricate interactions between individuals and their physical and social environments, or that the very same environments, including families, societal institutions, communities and friends, are absolutely essential in providing adolescents with the guidance, structure, experiences and encouragement necessary to produce positive outcomes during adolescence and adulthood (HHS, 1997). It is, therefore, not likely that the problem behaviors themselves impede a successful

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transition into adulthood. Instead, it is probable that the absence of the crucial support from families and other social environments diminishes the experience of a healthy and thriving adulthood (HHS, 1997).

After undergoing several paradigm shifts, youth development scholars and practitioners are now inspired by the phrase “fully prepared isn’t fully engaged,” implying that youth are viewed as more than community assets; they are valued as community leaders (Pittman et al., 2001; GCYF, 2003; Perkins et al., 2003). Young community members around the world and throughout the United States are partnering with local government officials and other community leaders to assume important leadership roles in youth councils as they identify youth issues, develop youth programming and represent the young student population in their community (Huber et al., 2003).

After close examination of several youth engagement frameworks and resources developed by scholars and community leaders who work with youth councils around the globe, it is evident that the development of citizenship education does not result from one prominent factor. Rather, it results from a complex mix of factors, influences and individuals. As a result of conducting an in-depth review of these frameworks and resources as well as other significant literature, three emerging focus areas and three community domains were identified. The three focus areas include: 1) background factors, such as previous involvement in community programs, that affect if and why a young person may get involved in community decision-making; 2) processes, such as the quality of the youth – adult mentor relationship, that determine to what extent

a youth's engagement in decision-making is beneficial and 3) outcomes, such as increased proficiency in civic skills, that assist youth in transitioning successfully into adulthood. The three community domains include: 1) the youth as an individual; 2) adult mentors and organizations; and 3) the wider community.

CHAPTER 3

METHODS

This chapter outlines the methods used to conduct this study. Specifically, it presents a background on previous studies conducted with youth councils in Michigan, a description of study participants, a review of steps taken to collect the data, an outline of the constructs and items included in the evaluation instruments and the processes used to analyze the data. The methods for this study were approved by the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) at Michigan State University (MSU).

Past Studies

This study builds on previous efforts by researchers at MSU, the Michigan Recreation and Park Association (MRPA) and the Michigan Municipal League (MML) that focused on youth engagement in community decision-making in the state of Michigan. These efforts include: 1) the 2003 Engaging Youth in Community Decision-Making Study and 2) the 2004 Michigan Youth Council Information Request (see Appendix A). Each of these studies was designed to build understanding about meaningful youth engagement in community decision-making and was instrumental in the development of the current study.

Study Participants for Present Study

This study was designed to examine two sets of individuals involved with youth council groups throughout Michigan: 1) youth members and 2) adult mentors. The following discussion describes the sample frame used to examine and evaluate youth council groups in Michigan.

Sample Frame

During Spring 2005, 43 active youth council groups were identified by their involvement in the Michigan Youth Council Information Request (38 groups) or Engaging Youth in Community Decision-Making Study (5 groups). Forty of these groups were primarily affiliated with parks and recreation organizations and local governments across the state and three groups were primarily affiliated with community foundations.

After beginning the process of identifying adult mentor contacts and distributing surveys, it came to the researchers' attention that a prominent and important group of youth councils primarily affiliated with Michigan Community Foundations was absent from the sample frame. In an attempt to explore and compare these youth councils and to increase the number of youth and adult responses, 26 active youth council groups associated with Michigan Community Foundations were added to the sample frame. These groups were identified from the Council of Michigan Foundation's online directory. The distributions of youth council groups by involvement in past studies are displayed in Table 1.

Table 1. Youth Council Groups by Involvement in Past Studies

Past Studies	Youth Council Groups
2003 Engaging Youth in Community Decision-Making	5 (7.25%)
2004 Michigan Youth Council Information Request	38 (55.07%)
2005 Michigan Community Foundation Online Directory	26 (37.68%)
TOTAL:	69

Based on the previous MRPA-MML investigations, it was determined that a typical youth council has an average of two adult mentors who work with youth council members. It was also determined that an average of 10 middle and high school youth approximately 11-19 years old may attend any given youth council meeting (range: 4-30). Therefore, researchers anticipated distributing questionnaires to an estimated 138 adult mentors and 690 middle and high school youth council members. The distribution of youth council groups, adult mentors and youth members included in the sample frame are reported across six Michigan regions, as defined by the Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) at the time of this study, in Table 2 (see Appendix B for map of MSUE regions).

Table 2. Council Groups, Adult Mentors and Youth Members by Region

Region	Youth Council Groups		Estimated # of:	
	Percent	Number	Adult Mentors	Youth Members
Southeast	37.68	26	52	260
West Central	20.29	14	28	140
Southwest	15.94	11	22	110
East Central	13.04	9	18	90
North	7.25	5	10	50
Upper Peninsula	5.80	4	8	40
TOTAL:	100	69	138	690

Data Collection

An adult mentor from each youth council group was contacted by email or phone during June 2005 to confirm their willingness to participate in this study and to verify their contact information. The following discourse explains the steps that were taken to collect the data for this study in two parts: 1) contacting youth council groups and 2) distributing and collecting surveys.

Contacting Youth Council Groups

Past MRPA-MML Study Participants. The contact information obtained for youth councils throughout Michigan during the past MRPA-MML investigations, as discussed previously, was used in this study to contact one adult mentor from each group that participated (this individual will be referred to as the adult contact for the remainder of this thesis). The adult contact was invited to participate in the present study via email along with all youth and other adults involved with their youth council. The email referred them to the study's informational website, which gave details, such as the study's purpose and instructions for participation. Also, each youth council group was presented with the choice to complete their surveys by mail or online. The adult contact was asked to make contact with MSU to indicate their agreement or refusal to participate in the study. If they agreed to participate, adult contacts were asked to indicate their participation preference (by mail or online) by completing and returning a short form attached to the email (see Appendix C). All groups were asked to include their community name, youth council name, number of youth council members and number of adult mentors on the form. Additionally, those

wishing to participate by mail were asked to provide their complete address and phone and fax numbers. Those preferring to participate online were asked to give the first names, last initials and email addresses of all youth council members and the first and last name and email address of each adult mentor. Completed forms were returned to MSU by email, fax or postal mail.

One week after sending the first email inviting youth councils previously involved with a MRPA-MML investigation to participate in the study, a phone call was made to the adult contact person from every group that had not yet responded to MSU. Again, the adult contact was invited to participate in the study along with all youth and other adults involved with their youth council and was presented with the option to complete their surveys by mail or online. If the adult contact agreed to participate, the researcher completed the form, as described above, while on the phone. In the event that an adult contact could not be reached, a message was given either to a colleague or on voicemail to briefly explain the study and to leave MSU contact information. Adult contacts who had not responded to the email or phone call were phoned again two weeks later and then again in two more weeks.

Groups Associated with Michigan Community Foundations. Potential youth council groups associated with Michigan Community Foundations were identified by a multi-step process. First, a list of Community Foundations was obtained from the Michigan Community Foundation's online directory. Next, each of the Community Foundation's respective websites (if available) was visited to determine if their organization mentioned the existence of a youth

council group. Community Foundations reporting a youth council on their website were then phoned according to the procedure explained in the previous section.

Distributing and Collecting Surveys

Participation By Mail. After initial contact was made with each youth council group and their participation preference (by mail or online) was established, the appropriate materials were sent to the adult mentor in July 2005. Specifically, those choosing to participate by mail were sent a packet including the following:

1. protocol for distributing parental permission forms, youth assent forms and youth and adult surveys for participation by mail (see Appendix D);
2. a form to document the administration and collection of parental permission forms, youth assent forms, and youth and adult surveys (see Appendix D);
3. youth assent forms (see Appendix F);
4. parental permission forms (see Appendix F);
5. youth and adult mentor surveys (see Appendix G);
6. small envelopes in which to place completed surveys;
7. youth flyer for online participation;
8. adult flyer for online participation; and
9. one large self-addressed, stamped envelope.

Upon receiving the survey packet, the adult contact was asked to first distribute the parental permission forms to youth members to be completed by their parent

or guardian. After obtaining their parent/guardian's permission, completing their own assent form and submitting both to their adult mentor, youth members were then eligible to complete a survey. Youth were instructed to place their completed surveys inside a small envelope, seal the envelope and return it to their adult contact. Finally, the adult contact was asked to mail all completed adult surveys and youth members' sealed envelopes in the large self-addressed and stamped envelope to MSU.

Participation Online. Those groups choosing to participate online were sent an email in July 2005 including the following:

1. protocol for participation and for distributing emails (see Appendix E);
2. links to the online resource guide, youth survey and adult survey (see Appendix G);
3. copy of email to forward to youth members and other adults (see Appendix E);
4. youth flyer for online participation; and
5. adult flyer for online participation.

If the adult contact had provided the names and email addresses of youth members and other adults in their group during initial contact with MSU, these individuals were also sent an email inviting them to participate at this time. In the event that the adult mentor had not provided the names and email addresses, they were asked to forward a portion of their email to youth members and other adults in their group. Like those participating by mail, online youth participants were also required to obtain their parent or guardian's permission and to

complete their own assent form. Both of these forms could be completed and submitted to MSU online. After obtaining their parent/guardian's permission and completing their own assent form, youth members were then eligible to complete an online survey.

Survey Instruments

The first purpose of this study was to conduct a literature review of youth development and civic engagement studies to develop a series of items and constructs for use in investigating youth engagement in community decision-making. Based on the literature review conducted for this study, it could not be found that there were any established scales addressing the engagement of youth in decision-making. Therefore, all items included in the questionnaire were adapted from studies examined during the review of the literature and from previous MRPA-MML studies.

As discussed in Chapter Two, the literature review identified three focus areas that address youth engagement in community decision-making:

1) background factors; 2) processes; and 3) outcomes. Three community domains were also identified: 1) the youth as an individual; 2) adult mentors and organizations; and 3) the wider community. The constructs and items for this study were developed from the literature surrounding these focus areas and community domains as well as from previous MRPA-MML studies. Tables 3, 4 and 5 outline the constructs and items used in this study.

Table 3. Background Factors – Constructs and Items

Constructs	Number of Items	
	Youth	Adult
1. Youth and mentor background factors		
1.1. Why youth got involved in youth council		
1.1.1 To participate in positive social experiences	4	4
1.1.2 To develop skills for the future	2	2
1.1.3 Personal experiences and personal networks	2	2
1.1.4 To take responsibility to better community	2	2
1.2. Parental community service involvement		
1.2.1 Volunteer/work experiences	2	0
1.2.2 Political participation	2	0
1.4. Demographics		
1.4.1 Gender	1	1
1.4.2 Race, ethnic or cultural background	7	7
1.4.3 Age	1	1
1.4.4 Education	0	7
1.4.5 Marital status	0	1
1.4.6 Year in school	1	0
1.4.7 Grades earned in school	1	0
1.4.8 Plans for the future	1	0
1.4.9 Years of residence	2	2
1.4.10 Household makeup	7	2
1.4.11 Number of households	1	1
1.4.12 Geographic area	1	1
1.5 Work history		
1.5.1 Years working/volunteering with youth	0	1
1.5.2 Years working with this youth council	0	1
1.5.3 Hours/months spent on youth council work	0	1
2. Organizational Background Factors		
2.1 Organization		
2.1.1 Mentor requirements	0	4
2.1.2 Number of mentors by employment status	0	2
2.1.3 Year formed	0	1

Table 4. Civic Engagement Activities – Constructs and Items

Constructs	Number of items	
	Youth	Adult
3. Civic Engagement Activities		
3.1 Youth council responsibilities		
3.1.1 Decision-making	5	3
3.1.2 Positive social experiences	7	7
3.1.3 Develop skills for the future	5	5
3.1.4 Youth Council leadership roles	8	0
3.1.5 Years involved	4	0
3.1.6 Outputs of youth council	0	2
3.2 Civic skills and community involvement		
3.2.1 Communication	5	5
3.2.2 Social activism	4	6
3.2.3 Understanding decision-making	3	3
1.3. Family support		
1.3.1 Relationship quality	6	0
1.3.2 Parental involvement	5	0
3.3 Mentor-Youth Interactions		
3.3.1 Youth supports	12	24
3.3.2 Level of decision-making	3	2
3.3.3 Relationship quality	6	6
3.3.4 Mentor involvement	2	4
3.3.5 Mentor feedback	0	1
3.4 Youth Council Makeup		
3.4.1 Council diversity	0	5
3.4.2 Number of youth involved	0	2
3.4.3 Number of times met during school year	0	1
3.4.4 Youth/Adult interaction	8	7
3.4.5 What roles were filled in youth council	0	8
3.4.6 Constitution or by-laws	0	1

Table 4 (cont'd).

Constructs	Number of items	
	Youth	Adult
3.5 Extracurricular Activities		
3.5.1 Participation in groups, clubs or teams	8	0
3.5.2 Leadership in groups, clubs or teams	8	0
3.5.3 Volunteer activities	3	4
3.5.4 Work	2	0
3.5.5 Requirement for volunteering	5	0
3.6 Youth Council Interactions		
3.6.1 Local government involvement	0	7
3.6.2 Reporting to department/organization	0	3
3.6.3 Type/function of youth council group	0	5
3.6.4 Other agencies/organization partnered with youth council	0	7
3.6.5 Number involved	1	1
3.6.6 Operating budget	0	1
3.6.7 Participation constraints	4	0

Table 5. Individual and Community Outcomes – Constructs and Items

Constructs	Number of items	
	Youth	Adult
4. Individual Outcomes		
4.1 Membership and belonging		
4.1.1 Positive social experiences	2	4
4.1.2 Develop skills for the future	2	2
4.1.3 Take responsibility to better community	2	2
5.3 Relationship quality	0	5
5.4 Mentor involvement	0	6
4.2 Civic skills		
4.2.1 Communication	5	5
4.2.2 Social activism	4	7
4.2.3 Understanding decision-making	3	3
4.2.4 Future political/community involvement	4	0
5. Community Outcomes		
5.1 Positive social experiences	8	7
5.2 Decision-making	4	3
5.3 Develop skills for the future	4	4

Data Analysis

After collecting surveys from youth council groups, the data were merged into the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS) program from the databases maintained for the online and mail surveys in August 2005. Next, the data were 'cleaned' by examining and correcting coding errors and inconsistencies (i.e. negatively worded items) and patterned responses. The resulting datasets were then used to: 1) generate basic descriptive statistics; 2) examine survey constructs and items (as outlined in Tables 3, 4 and 5) using exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and reliability analyses; and 3) examine if youth

member ratings of background and experience factors varied by cluster membership (high and low) using a cluster analysis.

An EFA and scale reliability tests (Cronbach's Alpha) were used to explore the structure of the items that were included in the instruments used for this study (as outlined in Tables 3, 4 and 5). As in other exploratory studies, the EFA procedure was also used as a tool to reduce the number of variables needed to measure youth council experiences and individual and community outcomes. In other words, the EFA helped to reduce the number of variables by creating a smaller number of factors that still captured the essence of the individual variables (StatSoft, Inc, 2006).

In order to investigate the relationships between outcome and background factors and outcome and experience factors, a cluster analysis was used. This procedure is most commonly used when there are no available a priori hypotheses and the research is still exploratory in nature (StatSoft, Inc, 2006), as in the present study. The cluster analysis is used to group related objects into respective categories (StatSoft, Inc, 2006). For this study, it is used to group respondents according to their reported level of outcomes (high or low) that resulted from their engagement in youth council groups. For instance, a respondent reporting a high level of outcomes was placed in the high cluster, whereas a respondent reporting comparatively lower levels of outcomes was placed in the low cluster. Pearson Chi-squares and t-tests were then used to test whether (or not) the high and low rating clusters had different ratings of background characteristics and experiences.

CHAPTER 4

RESULTS

This chapter reports the results of the statistical analyses that were conducted for this study. In particular, it presents respondent characteristics, the testing of the validity and reliability of the survey instrument, the establishment of high and low rating clusters and the use of Pearson Chi-squares and t-tests to explore the relationships between high and low clusters and the ratings of background characteristics and experiences.

Respondent Characteristics

A total of 72 youth members and 34 adult mentors completed a survey, representing a total of 33 youth council groups throughout Michigan (Table 6). The majority of councils replied by completing a survey online (n=24). Likewise, more youth members (n=48) and adult mentors (n=26) completed their surveys online than by mail.

Table 6. Number of Group, Adult and Youth Respondents by Survey Type

	Council Groups	Adult Mentors	Youth Members
Participated by mail	9	8	25
Participated online	24	26	48
TOTAL:	33	34	73

Of the 33 councils that responded, 24 had both youth member and adult mentor respondents, seven had only youth member respondents (no adults) and two had only adult mentor respondents (no youth). In addition, a greater number of groups were from metropolitan areas (n=25) than from rural areas (n=8) (see Appendix H for definition of metropolitan and rural).

Table 7: Number of Groups Responding by Region and Community Type

	Number of Groups	
	Metropolitan	Rural
Southeast	15	0
North	0	5
West Central	5	0
Southwest	3	0
East Central	2	1
Upper Peninsula	0	2
TOTAL:	25	8

More youth council members (49.3%) and adult mentors (44.1%) were from the Southeast region of the state than from any other region. Table 8 indicates these individuals and groups across six Michigan regions along with the response rate of individuals and groups.

Table 8. Respondent Groups, Adults and Youth by Region

	Council Groups		Adult Mentors		Youth Members	
	n=	Response Rate ¹	n=	Response Rate ¹	n=	Response Rate ¹
Southeast	15	57.7%	16	30.8%	36	13.8%
North	5	100.0%	5	50.0%	9	18.0%
West Central	5	35.7%	4	14.3%	9	6.4%
Southwest	3	27.3%	3	13.6%	8	7.3%
East Central	3	33.3%	2	11.1%	6	6.7%
Upper Peninsula	2	50.0%	4	50.0%	5	12.5%
OVERALL:	33	47.8%	34	24.6%	73	10.6%

¹Response rate calculated with estimated numbers (see Chapter 3): Adults = (estimated number of groups) x 2; Youth = (estimated number of groups) x 10.

Youth Council Groups

All adult mentor respondents reported being of one race, and the majority described themselves as being White (90.6%). In addition, youth members most commonly reported being of one race (95.3%), and the majority of these youth were White (82.0%). Approximately four percent of youth indicated that they had a Hispanic background.

Table 9. Adult and Youth Racial and Ethnic Backgrounds

	Adult Mentors (n=32)	Youth Members (n=64)
Ethnicity		
<i>Hispanic Origin</i>	0	3
Race		
<i>One Race</i>	32	61
White	29	50
Black or African-American	2	5
Asian, including Asian Indian	0	3
American Indian or Alaskan Native	0	1
Arabic/Chaldean	0	2
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0	0
Other	1	0
<i>Multi-Racial</i>	0	3

Respondents reported that their youth councils had an average of three adult mentors (range: 1-10; adult survey mean: 3.1; youth survey mean: 2.6). Adult mentors indicated that an average of 1.5 mentors (range: 0-6) were paid for their work with the youth council and an average of 1.8 (range: 0-7) completely volunteered their time. On average, adult mentors spent 17.8 hours on youth council related work during a typical month during the 2004-2005 school year. In addition, both youth and adult mentors specified that an average of 11.5 youth attendees were present at each meeting (range: 3-27). Adult mentors indicated that their groups had been established for an average of 7.4 years (range: 1-17) and most commonly cited that their council was primarily affiliated with a community foundation (47.1%). Similarly, youth members reported that their

groups were primarily associated with a community foundation (45.9%) and/or with a park and recreation agency (45.9%).

Table 10. Youth Council Affiliations

	Adult Mentors Percentage (n=34)	Youth Members Percentage (n=61)
Community Foundation	47.1%	45.9%
Parks and Recreation Agency	32.4%	45.9%
City Council/Town or Village Board	20.6%	39.3%
Mayor's Office	11.8%	19.7%
Other	26.5%	13.1%

Youth and adult respondents both reported that their council groups had an average of 3.6 youth members who held leadership roles during the 2004-2005 school year (range: 0-15). The youth leadership role most often cited by adult mentors was co- or vice-chair/youth mayor (66.7%). Youth members indicated that they held an average of 1.5 roles of responsibility in their youth council during the 2004-2005 school year. The role most often held by youth respondents was voting member/participant (58.9%). Table 11 presents additional information on youth roles of responsibility as indicated by adult mentors and on the roles of responsibility reported by youth respondents.

Table 11. Youth Council Leadership Roles

	Adult Mentors	Youth Members
	Percentage (n=33)	Percentage (n=73)
Chair/youth mayor/president	63.6%	19.2%
Co- or Vice-Chair/youth mayor	66.7%	19.2%
Treasurer	33.3%	0.0%
Secretary	54.5%	12.3%
Subcommittee member	39.4%	23.3%
Record Keeper	18.2%	2.7%
Voting member/participant	39.4%	58.9%
Non-voting member/participant	45.5%	8.2%
Other	21.2%	8.2%

Half of adult mentors indicated that their council groups met once a month, while 44.0% met more than once a month and only 6.0% met less than once a month. Adult mentors most commonly reported that their youth council was chiefly an advisory group that served to advise decision makers in their community on youth needs (76.5%).

Table 12. Youth Council Purpose and Frequency of Meetings

	Adult Mentors Percentage
Frequency of Youth Council Meetings	(n=34)
Three or more times per month	8.8%
Twice a month	35.3%
Once a month	50.0%
Less than Once a month	5.9%
Youth Council Purpose	(n=34)
An advisory group (to advise decision makers on youth needs)	76.5%
A leadership training program (to train youth in leadership skill development)	67.6%
A youth programming group (to plan and implement youth programs)	61.8%
An advocacy group (to advocate for and with other youth)	52.9%
Other	20.6%
A task group (that exists for a short time to provide input for a specific reason)	2.9%

Adult mentors were asked to indicate organizations or agencies that their council group worked or partnered with during the 2004-2005 school year. The majority of adults reported that their council worked or partnered with schools (87.9%) and non-profit organizations (72.7%). In addition, adult mentors were asked to specify what health-related topics their council addressed during the 2004-2005 school year. The most commonly cited topics were drugs/alcohol (48.5%) and tobacco/smoking (42.4%). Table 13 gives additional details on partner organizations/agencies and health related topics addressed in the 2004-2005 school year.

Table 13. Youth Council Partnerships and Health-Related Topics

	Adult Mentors
	Percentage
Partner Organizations/Agencies	(n=33)
Schools	87.9%
Non-profit	72.7%
Local/County Government (s)	60.6%
Community Foundation (s)	54.5%
Police	33.3%
Faith-based	27.3%
Private Corporation (s)	24.2%
State Government	6.1%
Health-Related Topics	(n=33)
Drugs/alcohol	48.5%
Tobacco/smoking	42.4%
Physical activity	39.4%
Teen pregnancy/STD's	27.3%
Violence/crime	27.3%
Mental health	24.2%
Nutrition	9.1%
Accessibility for persons with disabilities	9.1%

Adult Mentors

The majority of the adult mentors were female (67.7%), and all were over twenty-one years of age (range: 22-63; mean 42.7). On average, adult mentors reported being residents of the state of Michigan for sixteen and a half years, living in their present community for nineteen and a half years and living in their present home for ten years. In addition, adult mentors reported having worked or volunteered with youth for an average of 12.1 years and having worked with their current youth council for an average of 3.3 years. Adults most commonly reported being married (80.6%) and living in a home with an average of 2.3 adults eighteen years and older and one child under eighteen years. Lastly, most adult mentors indicated that they had earned their high school diploma/GED (80.6%), while the same percent reported earning their undergraduate degree.

Table 14. Adult Backgrounds

	Adult Mentors
Age in Years	n=32
20-29	5
30-39	5
40-49	15
50-59	3
60-69	4
Marital Status	n=31
Married	25
Single or never married	3
Divorced or Separated	3

Youth Council Members

On average, youth members indicated being involved in their youth council for 2.1 years. The majority of youth members were female (79.4%) and reported being an average age of sixteen years old (range: 13-19).

Additionally, youth reported being residents of the state of Michigan for an average of 15.1 years, living in their present communities for an average of 12.6 years and living in their present home for an average of 10.2 years. Youth also indicated living in a home with an average of 1.9 youth under eighteen years old (including them) and an average of 2.4 adults ages eighteen years or older. The majority of youth specified that they lived in a two parent household (94.4%). Youth most commonly cited that they were in the twelfth grade (32.4%) during the 2004-2005 school year, and all reported earning C grades or better, with almost fifty percent earning all A's (47.1%). In addition, all youth respondents reported that they planned to attend college after their graduation from high school.

Table 15. Youth Academic Background

	Youth Members
Grade Level	n=68
7th	1
8th	3
9th	10
10th	14
11th	18
12th	22
Grades Earned in School	n=68
All A's	32
A's and B's	27
A's, B's and C's	9
C's and D's	0
D's and F's	0

Youth members were asked a series of questions about their participation in extracurricular activities during the 2004-2005 school year. Specifically, they were asked to report if they worked at a paid job. Less than half of youth members indicated that they did work for pay (31.5%) during this time. Those who did work at a paid job reported working an average of 12.5 hours during a typical week. Youth respondents also reported participating in an average of 3.7 groups, clubs or teams other than their youth council during the past school year (range: 1-6) and holding an average of 1.4 leadership roles in these activities (range: 1-6).

Table 16. Youth Participation in Groups, Clubs and Teams

	Youth Members	
	<u>Participation</u> Percentage (n=73)	<u>Leadership</u> Percentage (n=72)
Community-service club or group	87.5%	33.3%
Sports team, league or club	72.2%	29.2%
Performing or visual arts club or group	70.8%	27.8%
Faith-based or religious club or group	58.3%	15.3%
School or student council	54.2%	25.0%
Environmental/nature-based club or group	23.6%	5.6%

Youth members were also asked to indicate which type of volunteer activities they were involved in during the 2004-2005 school year. Youth reported that they most often volunteered at their school, at a community-service organization or at a faith-based organization. Youth also reported volunteering least often for a political candidate or party or some political cause.

Table 17. Youth Volunteer Activities

	Youth Members		
	n=	Mean ¹	Std. Dev.
At a school (examples: helper, tutor, mentor, fundraising)	70	1.64	1.29
At a community-service organization (examples: charity, special needs, environmental agency)	69	1.62	.89
At a faith-based organization	68	1.60	1.55
As a coach, manager or leader at a sport or recreation program	67	1.04	1.49
For a political candidate or party or some political cause	67	.37	.69

¹Mean based on a 4 point weighted scale (never (0), once a month or less (1), a couple times a month (2), at least once a week (4)).

The majority of youth members reported that an agency or group required them to participate in a volunteer activity (67.1%). Clubs or societies were most commonly named as having this requirement.

Table 18. Volunteer Activities Required by Agency or Group

	Youth Members
	Percentage (n=49)
Club or Society (examples: National Honor Society, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Key Club)	63.3%
School	53.1%
Youth Council	49.0%

Validity and Reliability

The second purpose of this study was to test the factor structure of the theoretical constructs and the reliability of items used to measure youth member and adult mentor backgrounds, experiences and outcomes (individual and community). A series of exploratory factor analysis (EFA) and scale reliability tests (Cronbach's Alpha) were performed using SPSS in order to explore the instrumentation developed from the review of the literature and past MRPA-MML studies. The EFAs and reliability tests were conducted among three sets of constructs: 1) individual outcomes; 2) community outcomes; and 3) youth council experiences. Although youth and adult respondents were asked a series of identical questions regarding these three sets of items, only youth member response data were used to complete the EFAs and reliability tests because of the small number of adult mentor respondents. The factors that emerged from this analysis were then also applied to adult respondents in order to calculate a mean score for adult mentors for each factor.

Individual Outcomes

Using the original seven individual outcome constructs (22 items) (see Table 5) developed from the review of the literature and past MRPA-MML studies, an EFA was conducted using principle components and Vari Max Rotation. The rotated component matrix loadings for each item and the Cronbach's Alpha for each factor indicated that there were five factors representing twenty-two individual outcome items: 1) Communication (6 items); 2) Philanthropy (5 items); 3) Networking and Leadership (7 items); 4) Community

Activism (2 items); and 5) Future Political and Community Involvement (4 items).

The scale reliability tests for these five factors resulted in values ranging from $\alpha = .910$ (Communication) to $\alpha = .544$ (Future Political and Community Involvement). The Cronbach's Alpha, means, standard deviations and loadings for youth respondents are displayed in Table 19.

Table 19. Youth Member Ratings of Individual Outcome Factors

	Youth Members		
	Factor Loading	Mean ¹	Std. Dev.
Communication (6 items; $\alpha = .910$)	NA	3.62	0.83
Attend other public meetings (other than city council)	.871	3.70	1.27
Attend city council meetings	.775	3.66	1.42
Read at least a part of my local governments budget	.771	3.11	1.34
Write a letter to a community leader or group about an issue that is important to youth in my community	.769	3.69	1.33
Search for information about an issue that's important to youth in my community	.755	3.78	1.20
Give a presentation or speak to a community leader or group about an issue that important to youth in my community	.754	3.88	1.31
Philanthropy (5 items; $\alpha = .849$)	NA	3.89	0.91
Apply for a grant or donation in writing	.824	3.48	1.38
Increase awareness of health issues facing youth in my community	.797	3.48	1.38
Follow what is going on in my community	.753	3.95	1.04
Participate in fund raising initiatives	.636	4.06	0.98
Discuss community issues that are important to youth in my community	.570	4.27	1.04

Table 19 (cont'd).

	Youth Members		
	Factor Loading	Mean ¹	Std. Dev.
Networking and Leadership (7 items; $\alpha = .818$)	NA	3.87	0.83
Be involved with adults who care about me	.891	3.72	1.11
Make new friends with youth my age	.792	3.69	1.24
Gain skills to help me in the future	.756	4.25	1.05
Gain experience in a leadership role	.708	4.02	1.07
Help organize or run a meeting	.691	4.25	1.05
Spend more time with my friends	.643	3.12	1.35
Be involved in something exciting	.531	4.17	0.99
Community Activism (2 items; $\alpha = .696$)	NA	4.00	0.87
Help make my community a better place to live	NA	4.12	0.94
Provide more out-of-school activities for youth in my community	NA	3.76	1.03
Future Political and Community Involvement (4 items; $\alpha = .544$)	NA	4.27	.64
Will vote on state or federal issues	NA	4.74	.741
Will volunteer at a community-service organization	NA	4.54	.778
Will vote on local or community issues	NA	4.51	.964
Will volunteer for a political candidate or party or some political cause	NA	3.29	1.42

¹Mean based on 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

The mean score and standard deviation for three of the five individual outcome factors that emerged from the EFA were also calculated for adult mentor respondents. Adult mentors rated Communication higher than youth members while youth members rated Networking and Leadership and Philanthropy slightly higher than adult mentors.

Table 20. Adult Mentor Ratings of Individual Outcome Factors

	Adult Mentors		
	Mean ¹	Std. Dev.	Difference ²
Communication (6 items)	3.87	.920	.25
Networking and Leadership (7 items)	3.82	.817	-.05
Philanthropy (5 items)	3.85	.811	-.04

¹Mean based on 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

²Difference = (Adult Mentor Mean) – (Youth Member Mean)

Community Outcomes

An EFA was also performed to analyze the five original community outcome constructs (16 items) (see Table 5) developed from the review of the literature and past MRPA-MML studies. Respondents were asked to rate each of 16 items regarding community outcomes in two contexts: 1) importance - "It is important that my youth council can..."; and 2) performance - "My youth council's performance rating to...". Because there was a greater degree of variation in the data pertaining to importance (17 respondents marked "strongly agree" on at least 15 of the 16 items), data from the second context (performance) were used to establish factors. A check for patterned responses resulted in the exclusion of four respondents who indicated "strongly agree" on at least 15 of the 16 items regarding performance.

Next, the rotated component matrix loadings for each item and the Cronbach's Alpha for each factor were examined. It was determined that there were three factors (16 items) representing performance: 1) Youth Leadership and Hope (4 items); 2) Youth Activities and Services (8 items); and 3) Develop Skills

for the Future (4 items). The scale reliability tests for these three factors resulted in values ranging from $\alpha = .916$ (Youth Activities and Services) to $\alpha = .834$ (Develop Skills for the Future). Factor scores were then calculated for each construct using the mean of each set of items.

Table 21. Youth Member Ratings of Community Outcome Factors

	Youth Members				
	Performance			Importance	
	Factor Loading	Mean ¹	Std. Dev.	Mean ¹	Std. Dev.
Youth activities and services (8 items; Performance $\alpha = .916$; Importance $\alpha = .911$)	NA	3.59	.90	3.59	.90
Create more positive image of local government	.808	3.05	1.14	3.61	1.21
Help youth learn more about the role of local government	.765	3.09	1.12	4.26	1.28
Improve the view that adults have of youth in my community	.680	3.55	.99	4.26	.89
Give youth the opportunity to be involved with adults who care about them	.677	3.71	1.17	4.33	.90
Ensure that local government meets the needs of youth in my community	.643	3.17	1.08	4.04	1.29
Provide youth with opportunities to identify and learn about community	.592	3.49	1.15	4.10	1.01
Increase awareness about health issues for youth in my community	.563	3.17	1.12	4.07	.95
Prove a youth voice on issues facing youth and other community residents	.494	3.79	1.12	4.49	.84

Table 21 (cont'd).

	Youth Members				
	<u>Performance</u>			<u>Importance</u>	
	Factor Loading	Mean ¹	Std. Dev.	Mean ¹	Std. Dev.
Youth Leadership and Hope (4 items; Performance $\alpha = .860$; Importance $\alpha = .788$)	NA	3.72	.92	4.42	.65
Increase the participation of youth in positive out-of-school activities	.884	3.78	.95	4.66	.66
Increase number of youth who volunteer in my community	.830	3.62	1.14	4.40	.88
Provides more effective services for youth and their families	.681	3.62	1.17	4.22	1.06
Make my community a better place to live for youth and their families	.597	3.71	1.07	4.53	.88
Develop skills for the future (4 items; Performance $\alpha = .834$; Importance $\alpha = .807$)	NA	3.37	.91	3.73	.91
Give youth the opportunity to be involved in community service that will help them get a job or get into college	.782	3.71	1.11	4.39	.78
Help youth gain skills to help them in the future	.743	3.75	1.11	4.44	.80
Give youth the opportunity to gain experience in a leadership role	.696	3.97	1.17	4.59	.65
Give youth positive hope about the future	.543	3.48	1.07	4.25	1.04

¹ Mean based on 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

The mean score and standard deviation for each of the three community outcome factors that emerged from the EFA were also calculated for adult mentors for each set of items (performance and importance). Adult mentors rated all but two factors (for importance) higher than youth members: 1) Youth Leadership and 2) Hope and Develop Skills for the Future.

Table 22. Adult Mentor Ratings of Community Outcome Factors

	Adult Mentors					
	Performance			Importance		
	Mean ¹	Std. Dev.	Diff. ²	Mean ¹	Std. Dev.	Diff. ²
Youth Leadership and Hope (4 items)	4.40	.598	.68	4.04	.765	-.38
Youth Activities and Services (8 items)	4.39	.635	.80	3.86	.687	.27
Develop Skills for the Future (4 items)	4.13	.625	.76	3.58	.754	-.15

¹Mean based on 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

²Difference = (Adult Mentor Mean) – (Youth Member Mean).

Youth Council Experiences

Mentor Involvement. Using the five original mentor involvement constructs and 14 of the 15 items developed from the literature review and past MRPA-MML studies, an EFA was conducted (the only negatively worded item was not included). In order to check for patterned responses the only negatively worded item, "Adult mentors involved with my youth council miss a lot of meetings," was recoded. Still, six youth marked "strongly agree" on all 15 items. Because these potential patterned responses were apparent despite recoding the negatively worded item, no respondents were removed. After examining the rotated component matrix loadings for each item and the Cronbach's Alpha, it

was determined that there was one factor that represented 14 mentor involvement items.

Table 23. Youth Member Ratings of Mentor Involvement Factor

	Youth Members		
	Factor Loading	Mean ¹	Std. Dev.
Mentor Involvement (14 items; $\alpha = .948$)	NA	4.26	.72
Respect ideas and beliefs of all youth council participants	.745	4.61	.72
Treat all youth council members fairly	.829	4.57	.72
Provide guidance, but let youth make decisions	.713	4.46	.91
Recognize when youth council members do a good job	.692	4.45	.88
Ask for input from youth council members before making decisions that might affect youth council	.805	4.41	.89
Make sure that youth council members understand their responsibilities	.644	4.27	.95
Help get funding to support youth council efforts	.733	4.25	1.01
Provide feedback on how to improve the youth council	.568	4.25	.89
Share responsibility for decision-making with youth	.453	4.15	1.06
Provide training to help youth council members develop the skills that they need to be effective	.819	4.09	1.00
Publicly promote youth council efforts	.707	4.08	1.14
Keep youth council members informed about community issues	.499	4.06	.95
Make sure that all youth council members are involved in youth council meetings and activities	.664	4.03	.97
Try to get other community organizations involved in youth council efforts	.724	3.94	1.06

¹Mean based on 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

The mean score and standard deviation for the mentor involvement factor that emerged from the EFA were also calculated for adult mentor respondents (mean=4.19; std. dev.=.535). Adult mentors rated this factor slightly lower than youth members (mean difference = -.07).

Youth Council Climate. An EFA was performed to analyze the original youth council climate construct (8 items) developed from the literature review and past MRPA-MML studies. First, 17 respondents who indicated “strongly agree” on all eight items were excluded from the analysis. Second, all items were initially extracted into one factor and, therefore, no rotated component matrix loadings were calculated. Finally, the Cronbach’s Alpha for the factor was examined.

Table 24. Youth Member Ratings of Youth Council Climate Factor

	Youth Members	
	Mean ¹	Std. Dev.
Youth Council Climate (8 items; α = .925)	4.39	.71
I respected the opinions of other youth council members even if they were different than mine	4.55	.72
In enjoyed participating in youth council meetings and activities	4.46	.88
My opinions were valued by adult mentors	4.41	.79
My opinions were valued by other youth council members	4.41	.77
I am proud of the work I have done with my youth council	4.39	.97
Overall, I am satisfied with my youth council experiences	4.38	.88
I attended almost every youth council meeting and activity	4.37	1.01
Youth council meetings and activities were well organized	4.13	.96

¹Mean based on 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

The mean score and standard deviation for the youth council climate factor that emerged from the EFA were also calculated for adult mentor respondents (mean=4.31; std. dev.=.761). Adult mentors rated the youth council climate factor somewhat lower than youth members (mean difference = -.08).

Mentor and Parent Support. An EFA was performed to analyze mentor and parent support constructs. Youth respondents were asked to rate each of eight items regarding adult support in two contexts: 1) mentor support - "The mentor(s) in my youth council..."; and 2) parent support - "My parent(s) or guardian(s)...". Because the set of questions pertaining to mentor support were asked in an identical manner in the adult survey, youth responses to the two original mentor support constructs (8 items) were applied to the adults' mentor support responses and the youths' parent support context. After examining the rotated component matrix loadings for each item and the Cronbach's Alpha for each factor, it was determined that there were two factors that represented the eight mentor support items. Each factor was then applied to the parent support context and the Cronbach's Alpha for each factor was again obtained. There were two additional items in the parent support construct. These were included in a third factor.

Table 25. Youth Member Ratings of Mentor and Parent Support

	Mentor Support			Parent Support	
	Factor Loading	Mean ¹	Std. Dev.	Mean ¹	Std. Dev.
Encouragement (4 items; Mentor $\alpha = .828$; Parent $\alpha = .844$)	NA	4.21	.77	4.25	.90
Encourage me to share ideas and opinions even if we might disagree	.820	4.36	.87	4.01	1.11
Encourage me to get involved in activities to help make my community a better place to live	.792	4.34	.88	4.11	1.07
Trust me to do the right thing	.755	4.24	.97	4.33	.98
Are willing to help me with my problems	.670	3.90	1.09	4.51	.89
Talking about life (4 items; Mentor $\alpha = .822$; Parent $\alpha = .786$)	NA	3.45	1.13	4.24	.79
Talk about things that are important to me	.438	3.76	1.08	4.19	1.06
Talk with me about plans for my future	.778	3.34	1.31	4.51	.86
Talk with me about how things are going in my life	.763	3.30	1.43	4.04	1.12
Know all the youth that I spend my time with	.808	2.15	1.32	3.72	.97
Talking about community and federal issues (2 items; Parent $\alpha = .850$)	NA	NA	NA	3.69	1.09
Talk about state or federal issues with me	NA	NA	NA	3.69	1.21
Talk about local or community issues with me	NA	NA	NA	3.68	1.14

¹Mean based on 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

The mean score and standard deviation for both of the mentor support factors that emerged from the EFA were also calculated for adult mentor respondents. Adult mentors rated both factors higher than youth members.

Table 26. Adult Mentor Ratings of Mentor Support Factors

	Adult Mentors		
	Mean ¹	Std. Dev.	Difference ²
Talking about life (4 items)	3.71	.795	.26
Encouragement (4 items)	4.40	.504	.19

¹Mean based on 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

²Difference = (Adult Mentor Mean) – (Youth Member Mean).

Establishing High and Low Rating Clusters

The third purpose of this study was to examine if youth member ratings of background and experience factors varied by cluster membership (high and low) by exploring the following questions:

1. Do youth member ratings of mentor/organization background characteristics differ between high and low clusters for both individual and community outcome factors?
2. Do youth member ratings of youth council experiences differ between high and low clusters for both individual and community outcome factors?

Youth member factor scores were utilized to create clusters based on both individual and community outcomes. Due to the small number of respondents, a cluster analysis was conducted using two and three cluster solutions. Based on the results of these analyses, the two cluster solution was considered the most

interpretable. The two clusters were named high and low rating clusters according to youth respondents' ratings of the individual and community outcome factors. In other words, youth respondents indicating high mean scores (measured from low (1) to high (5) for individual outcome factors) were grouped in the high cluster for individual outcomes. Those reporting low mean scores for individual outcome factors were grouped in the low cluster. The number of youth respondents in each cluster for individual outcomes was as follows: high (n=50) and low (n=13). The number of respondents in each cluster for community outcomes was as follows: high (n=40) and low (n=24).

Table 27. Factors Included in Cluster Analysis

	# of Items	Mean ¹	
		Low Cluster	High Cluster
Individual Outcome Factors		n=13	n=50
Communication	6	2.25	4.09
Networking and Leadership	7	2.70	4.21
Philanthropy	5	2.66	4.22
Community Activism	2	3.27	4.16
Future Political and Community Involvement	4	3.81	4.38
Community Outcome Factors²		n=24	n=40
Youth Leadership and Hope	4	2.89	4.22
Youth Activities and Services	8	2.72	4.12
Develop Skills for the Future	4	2.44	3.93

¹Mean based on 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

²Performance statistics used (rather than importance).

Next, Pearson Chi-squares and t-tests were used to test whether (or not) the high and low rating clusters had different ratings of background characteristics and experiences. The Pearson Chi-square tests were used to explore nominal and ordinal data. T-tests were used to explore interval (Likert) and ratio data. The results of these tests are presented in the following sections.

Youth Council Experiences

The first set of statistical tests was conducted to address the following question: Do youth member ratings of youth council experiences differ between high and low clusters for both individual and community outcome factors? This question was examined in each of four categories: 1) youth council responsibilities; 2) youth council makeup; 3) extracurricular activities; and 4) mentor-youth interactions.

Youth Council Responsibilities. The high and low rating clusters for both individual and community outcomes were used to test the following hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in ratings of youth council responsibilities by high and low clusters. A total of eight t-tests and 32 Pearson Chi-square tests were conducted to explore this hypothesis.

As Tables 28 and 29 demonstrate, a significant difference was found between the high and low rating individual outcome clusters for seven of the 20 youth council responsibilities items and/or factors: 1) gaining skills in communication; 2) number of roles held in youth council; 3) gaining skills in philanthropy; 4) holding the chair/youth mayor/ president position; 5) holding non-

voting member/participant position; 6) required to provide input on all children, youth and family issues; and 7) youth serve on local government commissions.

Table 28. Youth Council Responsibilities and Individual Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Gaining skills in communication (6)³	63	t(33.26)= -4.82, p=0.00	rejected	H ² =2.34 L ² =0.73
Number of roles held in youth council	60	t(41.12)= -2.79, p=0.01	rejected	H=1.78 L=1.15
Gaining skills in philanthropy (5)³	60	t(58)= -0.69, p=0.07	rejected	H ² =3.06 L ² =2.36
Barriers to participating in youth council (4)³	63	t(61)= 0.39, p=0.12	accepted	O ² =2.09

¹H = mean of high rating cluster; L = mean of low rating cluster; O = overall mean.

²Mean based on a 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

³Factor (number of items in factor shown in parenthesis).

Table 29. Youth Council Responsibilities and Individual Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Percent ¹
Required to volunteer	44	$\chi^2(1)=0.41$, p=0.55	accepted	O=47.7%
Held chair/youth mayor/ president position	63	$\chi^2(1)=4.26$, p=0.04	rejected	H=26.0% L=0.0%
Held co- or vice-chair/ youth mayor position	63	$\chi^2(1)=2.00$, p=0.18	accepted	O=22.2%
Held voting member/ participant position	63	$\chi^2(1)=0.66$, p=0.42	accepted	O=63.5%
Held non-voting member/ participant position	63	$\chi^2(1)=5.14$, p=0.02	rejected	H=4.0% L=23.1%
Held secretary position	63	$\chi^2(1)=2.38$, p=0.12	accepted	O=12.7%
Held treasurer position	63	-	-	O=0.0%
Held record keeper position	63	$\chi^2(1)=0.54$, p=0.46	accepted	O=3.2%
Held subcommittee member position	63	$\chi^2(1)=0.13$, p=0.72	accepted	O=27.0%
Required to provide input on all children, youth and family issues	50	$\chi^2(1)=3.62$, p=0.06	rejected	H=0.0% L=9.1%
Required to produce an annual report or presentation	50	$\chi^2(1)=.07$, p=0.79	accepted	O=42.0%
City council asks for verbal input on youth issues	50	$\chi^2(1)=2.50$, p=0.11	accepted	O=28.0%
Youth serve on local government commissions	50	$\chi^2(1)=5.61$, p=0.02	rejected	H=48.0% L=9.1%
Youth serving on local government are able to vote	50	$\chi^2(1)=1.23$, p=0.27	accepted	O=10.3%
Youth council meets regularly with the head of local government	50	$\chi^2(1)=.45$, p=0.50	accepted	O=26.0%
Youth council meets regularly with other city council members	50	$\chi^2(1)=2.69$, p=0.10	accepted	O=16.0%

¹H = percent of high rating cluster; L = percent of low rating cluster; O = overall percent.

A significant difference was also found between the high and low rating community outcome clusters and two of the 20 youth council responsibilities items and/or factors: 1) gaining skills in philanthropy; and 2) held co- or vice-chair/ youth mayor position.

Table 30. Youth Council Responsibilities and Community Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Gaining skills in philanthropy (5)³	44	t(58)= -0.87, p=0.01	rejected	H²=3.15 L²=2.29
Gaining skills in communication (6) ³	60	t(58)= -0.46, p=0.31	accepted	O ² =1.89
Number of roles in youth council	60	t(62)= -0.27, p=0.34	accepted	O=1.52
Barriers to participating in youth council (4) ³	44	t(62)= -1.00, p=0.64	accepted	O ² =2.09

¹H = mean of high rating cluster; L = mean of low rating cluster; O = overall mean.

²Mean based on a 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

³Factor (number of items in factor shown in parenthesis).

Table 31. Youth Council Responsibilities and Community Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Percent ¹
Required to volunteer	42	$\chi^2(1)=1.36$, p=0.24	accepted	O=44.2%
Held chair/youth mayor/ president position	64	$\chi^2(1)=1.86$, p=0.17	accepted	O=20.3%
Held co- or vice-chair/ youth mayor position	64	$\chi^2(1)=4.12$, p=0.04	rejected	H=30.0% L=8.3%
Held voting member/ participant position	64	$\chi^2(1)=0.55$, p=0.46	accepted	O=64.1%
Held non-voting member/ participant position	64	$\chi^2(1)=1.17$, p=0.28	accepted	O=7.8%
Held secretary position	64	$\chi^2(1)=2.44$, p=0.12	accepted	O=12.5%
Held treasurer position	64	-	-	O=0.0%
Held record keeper position	64	$\chi^2(1)=0.14$, p=0.71	accepted	O=3.1%
Held subcommittee member position	64	$\chi^2(1)=0.36$, p=0.55	accepted	O=25.0%
Required to provide input on all children, youth and family issues	50	$\chi^2(1)=1.98$, p=0.16	accepted	O=2.0%
Required to produce an annual report or presentation	50	$\chi^2(1)=0.48$, p=0.49	accepted	O=42.0%
City council asks for verbal input on youth issues	50	$\chi^2(1)=0.26$, p=0.61	accepted	O=28.0%
Youth serve on local government commissions	50	$\chi^2(1)=1.20$, p=0.24	accepted	O=40.0%
Youth serving on local government are able to vote	50	$\chi^2(1)=2.24$, p=0.13	accepted	O=8.0%
Youth council meets regularly with the head of local government	50	$\chi^2(1)=0.57$, p=0.45	accepted	O=24.0%
Youth council meets regularly with other city council members	50	$\chi^2(1)=0.34$, p=0.56	accepted	O=16.0%

¹ H = percent of high rating cluster; L = percent of low rating cluster; O = overall percent.

Youth Council Makeup. The high and low rating clusters for both individual and community outcomes were used to test the following hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in ratings of youth council makeup characteristics by high and low clusters. This hypothesis was examined through the completion of 24 t-tests and 56 Pearson Chi-square tests.

A significant difference was found between high and low rating individual outcome clusters and seven of the 40 youth council makeup items and/or factors: 1) youth council diversity – income; 2) youth council diversity – social; 3) youth members encourage youth from all backgrounds to participate; 4) adult mentors encourage youth from all backgrounds to participate; 5) youth council is a task group; 6) youth council reviews family issues; and 7) youth council serves on local government.

Table 32. Youth Council Makeup and Individual Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Youth council age in years	46	t(44)=0.60, p=0.77	accepted	O=7.20
Number of youth attending a typical meeting	63	t(60)= -1.39, p=0.40	accepted	O=11.38
Number of youth leaders/officers	58	t(56)= -0.85, p=0.34	accepted	O=3.58
Number of years in youth council	63	t(61)= -0.51, p=0.14	accepted	O=2.07
Youth council diversity – racial and ethnic backgrounds	59	t(57)= -0.614, p=0.21	accepted	O=3.40
Youth council diversity - income	48	t(46)= -1.23, p=0.03	rejected	H²=3.40 L²=2.17
Youth council diversity - abilities	59	t(57)= -0.38, p=0.40	accepted	O=3.37
Youth council diversity - social	59	t(10.51)= -1.17, p=0.02	rejected	H²=4.47 L²=3.30
Youth members encourage youth from all backgrounds to participate	56	t(54)= -1.31, p=0.00	rejected	H²=4.22 L²=2.91
Adult mentors encourage youth from all backgrounds to participate	55	t(10.35)= -1.00, p=0.07	rejected	H²=4.60 L²=3.60
Number of adult mentors	59	t(57)= -0.17, p=0.72	accepted	O=2.72
Number of adult mentors attending a typical meeting	58	t(56)=0.21, p=0.61	accepted	O=2.11

¹H = mean of high rating cluster; L = mean of low rating cluster; O = overall mean.

²Mean based on a 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

Table 33. Youth Council Makeup and Individual Outcomes Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Percent ¹
Report to parks and recreation department	56	$\chi^2(1)=0.06$, p=0.80	accepted	O=46.4%
Report to the mayor's office	56	$\chi^2(1)=0.94$, p=0.33	accepted	O=21.4%
Report to city council/town or village board	56	$\chi^2(1)=0.62$, p=0.43	accepted	O=41.4%
Report to a community foundation	56	$\chi^2(1)=0.20$, p=0.65	accepted	O=46.4%
Frequency of meetings	47	$\chi^2(1)=0.77$, p=0.38	accepted	O=57.4% More than once/month
Chair/youth mayor/ president position filled 2004-2005	48	$\chi^2(1)=0.01$, p=0.94	accepted	O=64.6%
Co or vice chair/youth mayor position filled 2004-2005	48	$\chi^2(1)=0.39$, p=0.54	accepted	O=62.5%
Voting member position filled 2004-2005	48	$\chi^2(1)=0.76$, p=0.38	accepted	O=47.9%
Non-voting member position filled 2004-2005	48	$\chi^2(1)=0.02$, p=0.89	accepted	O=43.8%
Secretary position filled 2004-2005	48	$\chi^2(1)=0.62$, p=0.43	accepted	O=72.9%
Treasurer position filled 2004-2005	48	$\chi^2(1)=1.57$, p=0.21	accepted	O=43.8%
Record keeper position filled 2004-2005	48	$\chi^2(1)=0.57$, p=0.45	accepted	O=27.1%
Subcommittee member position filled 2004-2005	48	$\chi^2(1)=0.001$, p=0.98	accepted	O=45.8%
Youth council is an advisory group	50	$\chi^2(1)=0.26$, p=0.61	accepted	O=76.0%
Youth council is a leader training program	50	$\chi^2(1)=0.004$, p=0.95	accepted	O=72.0%

Table 33 (cont'd).

		Youth Members		
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Percent ¹
Youth council is an advocacy group	50	$\chi^2(1)=0.91$, p=0.34	accepted	O=42.0%
Youth council is a task group	50	$\chi^2(1)=3.62$, p=0.06	rejected	H=0.0% L=9.1%
Youth council is a youth programming group	49	$\chi^2(1)=1.19$, p=0.27	accepted	O=65.3%
Youth council has a written constitution	50	$\chi^2(1)=0.67$, p=0.41	accepted	O=72.0%
Youth council reviews family issues	50	$\chi^2(1)=3.62$, p=0.06	rejected	H=0.0% L=9.1%
Youth council produces an annual or more often report	50	$\chi^2(1)=0.07$, p=0.79	accepted	O=42.0%
City council asks for youth council input	50	$\chi^2(1)=2.50$, p=0.11	accepted	O=28.0%
Youth council serves on local government	50	$\chi^2(1)=5.61$, p=0.02	rejected	H=48.7% L=9.1%
Youth council who serve on local government can vote	50	$\chi^2(1)=1.23$, p=0.27	accepted	O=8.0%
Youth council meets with head of local government	50	$\chi^2(1)=0.45$, p=0.50	accepted	O=26.0%
Youth council members meet with city council members	50	$\chi^2(1)=2.69$, p=0.10	accepted	O=16.0%
Youth council has a budget	47	$\chi^2(1)=0.08$, p=0.77	accepted	O=76.6%
Metro or Rural	63	$\chi^2(1)=0.36$, p=0.55	accepted	O=82.5% Metro

¹H = percent of high rating cluster; L = percent of low rating cluster; O = overall percent.

A significant difference was also found between high and low rating community outcome clusters and six of the forty youth council makeup items and/or factors: 1) youth council diversity – racial and ethnic backgrounds; 2) youth council diversity – income; 3) youth council diversity – social; 4) youth members encourage youth from all backgrounds to participate; 5) adult members encourage youth from all background to participate and 6) youth council is a task group.

Table 34. Youth Council Makeup and Community Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Youth council age in years	46	t(44)= -0.51, p=0.78	accepted	O=7.20
Number of youth attending a typical meeting	63	t(60)= -1.31, p=0.35	accepted	O=11.38
Number of youth leaders/officers	59	t(57)= -0.23, p=0.75	accepted	O=3.58
Number of years in youth council	64	t(62)= -0.13, p=0.68	accepted	O=2.07
Youth council diversity – racial and ethnic backgrounds	56	t(54)= -0.77, p=0.05	rejected	H²=3.47 L²=2.70
Youth council diversity - income	45	t(43)= -0.39, p=0.03	rejected	H²=3.52 L²=3.13
Youth council diversity - abilities	56	t(54)= -0.33, p=0.38	accepted	O ² =3.37
Youth council diversity - social	56	t(26.46)= -1.04, p=.00	rejected	H²=4.64 L²=3.60
Youth members encourage youth from all backgrounds to participate	55	t(31.10)= -1.35, p=0.00	rejected	H²=4.40 L²=3.05
Adult mentors encourage youth from all backgrounds to participate	53	t(23.19)= -0.94, p=0.01	rejected	H²=4.68 L²=3.74
Number of adult mentors	61	t(59)= -0.30, p=0.43	accepted	O=2.72
Number of adult mentors attending a typical meeting	60	t(58)= -0.26, p=0.43	accepted	O=2.11

¹H = mean of high rating cluster; L = mean of low rating cluster; O = overall mean.

²Mean based on a 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

Table 35. Youth Council Makeup and Community Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Percent ¹
Report to parks and recreation department	58	$\chi^2(1)=2.02$, p=0.16	accepted	O=44.8%
Report to the mayor's office	58	$\chi^2(1)=0.00$, p=0.99	accepted	O=19.0%
Report to city council/town or village board	58	$\chi^2(1)=0.00$, p=0.99	accepted	O=37.9%
Report to a community foundation	58	$\chi^2(1)=0.60$, p=0.44	accepted	O=44.8%
Frequency of meetings	47	$\chi^2(1)=0.67$ p=0.41	accepted	O=55.3% More than once/month
Chair/youth mayor/ president position filled 2004-2005	48	$\chi^2(1)=0.74$, p=0.39	accepted	O=62.5%
Co or vice chair/youth mayor position filled 2004-2005	48	$\chi^2(1)=1.04$, p=.031	accepted	O=62.5%
Voting member position filled 2004-2005	48	$\chi^2(1)=1.18$, p=0.28	accepted	O=45.8%
Non-voting member position filled 2004-2005	48	$\chi^2(1)=0.02$, p=0.79	accepted	O=43.8%
Secretary position filled 2004-2005	48	$\chi^2(1)=0.20$, p=0.65	accepted	O=68.8%
Treasurer position filled 2004-2005	48	$\chi^2(1)=0.44$, p=0.51	accepted	O=41.7%
Record keeper position filled 2004-2005	48	$\chi^2(1)=0.07$, p=0.79	accepted	O=27.1%
Subcommittee member position filled 2004-2005	48	$\chi^2(1)=0.32$, p=0.58	accepted	O=41.7%
Youth council is an advisory group	50	$\chi^2(1)=0.04$, p=0.85	accepted	O=78.0%
Youth council is a leader training program	50	$\chi^2(1)=0.41$, p=0.52	accepted	O=76.0%
Youth council is an advocacy group	50	$\chi^2(1)=0.08$, p=0.77	accepted	O=44.0%

Table 35 (cont'd).

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Percent ¹
Youth council is a task group	50	$\chi^2(1)=4.04,$ $p=0.04$	rejected	H=.0% L=11.8%
Youth council is a youth programming group	49	$\chi^2(1)=2.67,$ $p=0.10$	accepted	O=65.3%
Youth council has a written constitution	50	$\chi^2(1)=0.51,$ $p=0.47$	accepted	O=70.0%
Youth council reviews family issues	50	$\chi^2(1)=1.98,$ $p=0.16$	accepted	O=2.0%
Youth council produces an annual (or more often) report	50	$\chi^2(1)=0.48,$ $p=0.49$	accepted	O=42.0%
City council asks for youth council input	50	$\chi^2(1)=0.26,$ $p=0.61$	accepted	O=28.0%
Youth council serves on local government	50	$\chi^2(1)=1.20,$ $p=0.27$	rejected	O=40.0%
Youth council who serve on local government can vote	50	$\chi^2(1)=2.24,$ $p=0.13$	accepted	O=8.0%
Youth council meets with head of local government	50	$\chi^2(1)=0.57,$ $p=0.45$	accepted	O=24.0%
Youth council members meet with city council members	50	$\chi^2(1)=0.34,$ $p=0.56$	accepted	O=16.0%
Youth council has a budget	47	$\chi^2(1)=2.17,$ $p=0.14$	accepted	O=74.5%
Metro or Rural	64	$\chi^2(1)=0.01,$ $p=0.94$	accepted	O=79.7% Metro

¹H = percent of high rating cluster; L = percent of low rating cluster; O = overall percent.

Extracurricular Activities. The high and low rating clusters for both individual and community outcomes were used to test the following hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in ratings of youths' participation in extracurricular activities by high and low clusters. A total of eight t-tests and six Pearson Chi-square tests were implemented to investigate this hypothesis.

A significant difference was found between high and low rating individual outcome clusters and two of the seven extracurricular activities items and/or factors: 1) youth volunteer in their community; and 2) volunteer activities required by club or society.

Table 36. Extracurricular Activities and Individual Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Youth volunteer in their community (5)³	62	t(60)= -2.35, p=0.02	rejected	H ² =6.65 L ² =4.31
Participation in groups, clubs and/or teams (7) ³	63	t(61)= -0.15, p=0.77	accepted	O=3.90
Held leadership position(s) in groups, clubs and/or teams (7) ³	63	t(61)= -0.14, p=0.79	accepted	O=1.48
Number of hours worked at a paid job	63	t(61)= -0.53, p=0.84	accepted	O=4.40

¹H = mean of high rating cluster; L = mean of low rating cluster; O = overall mean.

²Measured on summated scale: never (0) to at least once a week (20).

³Represents sum of items (number of items shown in parenthesis).

Table 37. Extracurricular Activities and Individual Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Percent ¹
Volunteer activities required by school	44	$\chi^2(1)=1.65$ p=0.19	accepted	O=54.5%
Volunteer activities required by club or society	44	$\chi^2(1)=3.51$, p=0.06	rejected	H=72.2% L=37.5%
Worked at a paid job	63	$\chi^2(1)=0.01$, p=0.93	accepted	O=31.7%

¹H = percent of high rating cluster; L = percent of low rating cluster; O = overall percent.

Significant differences were also found between high and low rating community outcome clusters and two of the seven extracurricular activities items and/or factors: 1) participation in groups, clubs and/or teams; and 2) volunteer activities required by school.

Table 38. Extracurricular Activities and Community Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Youth volunteer in their community (5) ³	64	t(62)= -0.59, p=0.51	accepted	O ² =5.99
Participation in groups, clubs and/or teams (7)³	64	t(62)=0.71, p=0.08	rejected	H=3.75 L=4.46
Held leadership position(s) in groups, clubs and/or teams (7) ³	64	t(62)= -0.26, p=0.52	accepted	O=1.48
Number of hours worked at a paid job	64	t(62)=0.83, p=0.66	accepted	O=4.40

¹H = mean of high rating cluster; L = mean of low rating cluster; O = overall mean.

²Measured on summated scale: never (0) to at least once a week (20).

³Represents sum of items (number of items shown in parenthesis).

Table 39. Extracurricular Activities and Community Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Percent ¹
Volunteer activities required by school	43	$\chi^2(1)=0.001$, p=0.09	rejected	H=53.3% L=53.8%
Volunteer activities required by club or society	43	$\chi^2(1)=0.003$, p=0.96	accepted	O=69.8%
Worked at a paid job	64	$\chi^2(1)=0.69$, p=0.40	accepted	O=31.3%

¹H = percent of high rating cluster; L = percent of low rating cluster; O = overall percent.

Mentor-Youth Interactions. The high and low rating clusters for both individual and community outcomes were used to test the following hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in ratings of mentor-youth interactions by high and low clusters. This hypothesis was explored by executing a total of six t-tests.

As Table 40 specifies, a significant difference was found between high and low rating individual outcome clusters and all three mentor-youth interactions items and/or factors: 1) mentor involvement; 2) mentor support – encouragement; and 3) mentor support – talking about life.

Table 40. Mentor-Youth Interactions and Individual Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Mentor involvement (14)³	61	t(58)= -5.18, p=0.00	rejected	H ² =4.51 L ² =3.51
Mentor support – encouragement (4)³	61	t(58)= -4.90, p=0.00	rejected	H ² =4.45 L ² =3.42
Mentor support - talking about life (4)³	62	t(59)= -2.02, p=0.05	rejected	H ² =3.30 L ² =2.65

¹H = mean of high rating cluster; L = mean of low rating cluster.

²Mean based on a 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

³Factor (number of items in factor shown in parenthesis).

Significant differences were also found between high and low rating community outcome clusters and all three mentor-youth interactions items and/or factors: 1) mentor involvement; 2) mentor support – encouragement; and 3) mentor support – talking about life.

Table 41. Mentor-Youth Interactions and Community Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Mentor involvement (14)³	63	t(61)= -4.89, p=0.00	rejected	H ² =4.57 L ² =3.79
Mentor support – encouragement (4)³	63	t(61)= -4.26, p=0.00	rejected	H ² =4.53 L ² =3.78
Mentor support - talking about life (4)³	63	t(61)= -3.07, p=0.00	rejected	H ² =3.46 L ² =2.71

¹H = mean of high rating cluster; L = mean of low rating cluster.

²Mean based on a 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

³Factor (number of items in factor shown in parenthesis).

Youth Council Interactions. The high and low rating clusters for both individual and community outcomes were used to test the following hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in ratings of youth council interactions by high and low clusters. A total of two t-tests were conducted to examine this hypothesis.

As Tables 42 and 43 demonstrate, a significant difference was found between respondents' ratings of individual outcomes and youth council climate as well as between respondents' ratings of community outcomes and youth climate.

Table 42. Youth Council Interactions and Individual Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Youth council climate (8)³	63	t(14.00)= -4.01, p=0.00	rejected	H²: 4.62 L²:3.64

¹H = mean of high rating cluster; L = mean of low rating cluster.

²Mean based on a 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

³Factor (number of items in factor shown in parenthesis).

Table 43. Youth Council Interactions and Community Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Youth council climate (8)³	64	t(62)= -2.55, p=0.02	rejected	H²=4.56 L²=4.10

¹H = mean of high rating cluster; L = mean of low rating cluster.

²Mean based on a 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

³Factor (number of items in factor shown in parenthesis).

Youth, Organization and Mentor Background Factors

Statistical tests were conducted to address the following question: Do youth member ratings of mentor/organization background characteristics differ between high and low clusters for both individual and community outcome factors? This question was examined in each of four categories: 1) youth background factors; 2) organization background factors; and 3) mentor background factors.

Youth background factors. The high and low rating clusters for both individual and community outcomes were used to test the following hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in respondents' ratings of youth background factors by high and low clusters. Twenty-six t-tests and 14 Pearson Chi-square tests were conducted to explore this hypothesis.

As Tables 44 and 45 reveal, no significant differences were found between high and low rating individual outcome clusters and youth demographic items and/or factors.

Table 44. Youth Demographics and Individual Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Age in years	62	t(60)= -1.33, p=0.19	accepted	O ² =16.00

¹O = overall mean.

²Mean based on a 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

Table 45. Youth Demographics and Individual Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Percent ¹
Gender	61	$\chi^2(1)=0.12$, p=0.73	accepted	O=78.7% female
Racial background	59	$\chi^2(1)=0.001$, p=0.97	accepted	O=74.6% White
Grade Level	60	$\chi^2(1)=1.71$ p=0.19	accepted	O=58.3% 11 th grade and up
Grades earned in school	60	$\chi^2(1)=2.05$ p=0.15	accepted	O=48.3% All As

¹O = overall percent.

As with high and low rating individual outcomes and youth demographic items and/or factors, no significant differences were found between high and low rating community outcome clusters and youth demographic items and/or factors. Tables 46 and 47 display the results of the significance tests.

Table 46. Youth Demographics and Community Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Age in years	64	t(62)= -1.25, p=0.21	accepted	O=16.00

¹O = overall mean.

Table 47. Youth Demographics and Community Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Percent ¹
Gender	62	$\chi^2(1)=0.01$, p=0.91	accepted	O=79.0% female
Racial background	61	$\chi^2(1)=1.15$, p=0.28	accepted	O=73.8% White
Grade Level	62	$\chi^2(1)=1.11$ p=0.29	accepted	O=56.5% 11 th grade and up
Grades earned in school	62	$\chi^2(1)=0.71$ p=0.40	accepted	O=48.4% All As

¹O = overall percent.

A significant difference was found between high and low rating individual outcome clusters and three of the six parent influence items and/or factors: 1) parent volunteer experience; 2) parent support – encouragement; and 3) parent support – talking about life.

Table 48. Parent Influence and Individual Outcome Clusters

	n=	Youth Members		
		Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Parent volunteer experience (5) ⁴	63	t(61)= -2.67, p=0.01	rejected	H ² =5.76 L ² =2.77
Parent support – encouragement (4) ⁵	63	t(61)= -2.84, p=0.01	rejected	H ³ =4.37 L ³ =3.69
Parent support - talking about life (4) ⁵	63	t(61)= -3.28, p=0.00	rejected	H ³ =4.44 L ³ =3.56
Parent support - talking about community issues (2) ⁵	63	t(61)= -1.55, p=0.13	accepted	O ³ =3.69

¹H = mean of high rating cluster; L = mean of low rating cluster; O = overall mean.

²Measured on summated scale: never (0) to at least once a week (20).

³Mean based on a 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

⁴Represents sum of items (number of items in parenthesis).

⁵Factor (number of items in factor shown in parenthesis).

Table 49. Parent Influence and Individual Outcome Clusters

	n=	Youth Members		
		Significance Test	H ₀	Percent ¹
Parents participate in local elections	54	$\chi^2(1)=0.18$, p=0.67	accepted	O=1.9%
Parents participate in state and federal elections	58	-	-	-

¹O = overall percent.

Significant differences were also found between high and low rating community outcome clusters and three of the six parent influence items and/or factors: 1) parent volunteer experience; 2) parent support – talk about life; and 3) parent support – talking about community issues.

Table 50. Parent Influence and Community Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Parent volunteer experience (5)⁴	64	t(62)= -20.32, p=0.05	rejected	H²=6.05 L²=4.04
Parent support – encouragement (4) ⁵	64	t(62)= -1.56, p=0.12	accepted	O ³ =4.24
Parent support - talking about life (4)⁵	64	t(37.364)= -2.33, p=0.03	rejected	H³=4.44 L³=3.86
Parent support - talking about community issues (2)⁵	64	t(62)= -2.71, p=0.01	rejected	H³=3.93 L³=3.19

¹H = mean of high rating cluster; L = mean of low rating cluster; O = overall mean.

²Measured on summated scale: never (0) to at least once a week (20).

³Mean based on a 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

⁴Represents sum of items (number of items in parenthesis).

⁵Factor (number of items in factor shown in parenthesis).

Table 51. Parent Influence and Community Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Percent ¹
Parent participation in local elections	56	$\chi^2(1)=0.52, p=0.47$	accepted	O=1.8%
Parent participation in state and federal elections	60	-	-	-

¹O = overall percent.

As Tables 52 and 53 provide, no significant differences were found between high and low rating individual outcome clusters and youth household and mobility items and/or factors. However, it is important to recognize that a considerable number of youth reported living in a two parent household (95.2%).

Table 52. Youth Households and Mobility and Individual Outcome Clusters

	n=	Youth Members		
		Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Number of youth under 18 years old living in household	62	t(60)=0.77 , p=0.45	accepted	O=1.74
Number of adults 18 years and older living in household	62	t(60)= -0.09, p=0.93	accepted	O=2.37
Years living in present home	61	t(59)=0.39, p=0.69	accepted	O=10.19
Years living in present community	62	t(60)=0.20, p=0.84	accepted	O=14.75
Years living in Michigan	62	t(60)=-0.79, p=0.43	accepted	O=15.09

¹O = overall mean.

Table 53. Youth Households and Mobility and Individual Outcome Clusters

	n=	Youth Members		
		Significance Test	H ₀	Percent ¹
Youth lives in two parent household	62	$\chi^2(1)=0.84$, p=0.36	accepted	O=95.2%

¹O = overall percent.

A significant difference was found between high and low rating community outcome clusters and two of the six youth household and mobility items and/or factors: 1) number of adults 18 years and older living in household and 2) years living in Michigan.

Table 54. Youth Households and Mobility and Community Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Number of youth under 18 years old living in household	64	t(62)= -1.29, p=0.20	accepted	O=1.74
Number of adults 18 years and older living in household	64	t(62)= -2.04, p=0.05	rejected	H=2.58 L=2.17
Years living in present home	63	t(61)= -0.26, p=0.79	accepted	O=10.19
Years living in present community	64	t(62)=0.19, p=0.85	accepted	O=14.75
Years living in Michigan	64	t(32.595)= -2.12, p=0.04	rejected	H=15.88 L=14.17

¹H = mean of high rating cluster; L = mean of low rating cluster; O = overall mean.

Table 55. Youth Households and Mobility and Community Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Percent ¹
Youth lives in two parent household	63	$\chi^2(1)=.030$, p=.862	accepted	O=95.2%

¹O = overall percent.

A significant difference was found between high and low rating individual outcome clusters and one of the three motivations for involvement items and/or factors: joined for networking and leadership.

Table 56. Motivation for Involvement and Individual Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Joined for networking and leadership (6)²	62	t(60)= -2.51, p=0.02	rejected	H=3.98 L=2.69
Joined for civic activism (2) ²	62	t(15.264)= -0.35, p=0.73	accepted	O=1.51
Joined because invited by youth and adults (2) ²	62	t(28.340)= -0.49, p=0.62	accepted	O=1.10

¹H = mean of high rating cluster; L = mean of low rating cluster; O = overall mean.

²Represents sum of items (number items in parenthesis).

Similarly, significant differences were found between high and low rating community outcome clusters and one of the three motivation for involvement items and/or factors: joined for networking and leadership.

Table 57. Motivation for Involvement and Community Outcome Clusters

	Youth Members			
	n=	Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Joined for networking and leadership (6)²	62	t(60)= -2.16, p=0.04	rejected	H=3.97 L=3.04
Joined for civic activism (2) ²	62	t(34.634)= -1.02, p=0.32	accepted	O=1.51
Joined because invited by youth and adults (2) ²	62	t(60)= -0.48, p=0.64	accepted	O=1.10

¹H = mean of high rating cluster; L = mean of low rating cluster; O = overall mean.

²Represents sum of items (number of items in parenthesis).

Organization background factors. The high and low rating clusters for both individual and community outcomes were used to test the following hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in ratings of organization background factors by high and low clusters. Six t-tests were performed to investigate this hypothesis.

As Table 58 demonstrates, a significant difference was found between high and low rating individual outcome clusters and one of the three organization background factors items and/or factors: number of paid mentors.

Table 58. Organization Background Factors and Individual Outcome Clusters

	n=	Youth Members		
		Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Number of paid mentors	49	t(38.83)= -2.18, p=0.04	rejected	H=1.66 L=1.00
Number of volunteering mentors	49	t(47)= -0.44, p=0.66	accepted	O=1.87
Youth council age in years	46	t(44)=0.29, p=0.77	accepted	O=5.34

¹H = mean of high rating cluster; L = mean of low rating cluster; O = overall mean.

A significant difference was also found between high and low rating individual outcome clusters and one of the three organization background factors items and/or factors: number of volunteering mentors.

Table 59. Organization Background Factors and Community Outcome Clusters

	n=	Youth Members		
		Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Number of paid mentors	49	t(47)=0.15, p=0.88	accepted	O=1.48
Number of volunteering mentors	49	t(47)= -1.81, p=0.08	rejected	H=2.38 L=1.47
Youth council age in years	46	t(44)= -0.28, p=0.78	accepted	O=5.34

¹H = mean of high rating cluster; L = mean of low rating cluster; O = overall mean.

Mentor background factors. The high and low rating clusters for both individual and community outcomes were used to test the following hypothesis: There will be no significant difference in ratings of adult background factors by high and low clusters. A total of sixteen t-tests were implemented to explore this hypothesis.

As Table 60 exhibits, no significant differences were found between high and low rating individual outcome clusters and adult background factors items and/or factors.

Table 60. Mentor Background Factors and Individual Outcome Clusters

	n=	Youth Members		
		Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Age in years	29	t(27)=0.32, p=0.75	accepted	O=42.66
Years living in present home	61	t(59)=0.39, p=0.69	accepted	O=10.19
Years living in present community	62	t(60)=0.20, p=0.84	accepted	O=14.75
Years living in Michigan	62	t(60)= -0.79, p=0.43	accepted	O=21.81
Number of youth under 18 years old living in household	62	t(60)=0.77, p=0.44	accepted	O=1.74
Number of adults 18 years and older living in household	62	t(60)= -0.09, p=0.93	accepted	O=2.37
Years working with this youth council	31	t(29)= -0.57, p=0.57	accepted	O=3.29
Hours spent per month on youth council related work	26	t(5.38)=1.46, p=0.20	rejected	O=17.83

¹O = overall mean.

Likewise, no significant differences were found between high and low rating individual outcome clusters and adult background factors items and/or factors.

Table 61. Mentor Background Factors and Community Outcome Clusters

	n=	Youth Members		
		Significance Test	H ₀	Mean ¹
Age in years	28	t(26)=0.14, p=0.89	accepted	O=42.66
Years living in present home	63	t(61)= -0.26, p=0.79	accepted	O=10.19
Years living in present community	64	t(62)=0.19, p=0.86	accepted	O=14.75
Years living in Michigan	64	t(32.59)= -2.12, p= -1.71	accepted	O=21.81
Number of youth under 18 years old living in household	64	t(61)=-1.29, p=-0.47	accepted	O=1.74
Number of adults 18 years and older living in household	64	t(61)= -2.04, p=0.45	accepted	O=2.37
Years working with this youth council	30	-	-	-
Hours spent per month on youth council related work	25	t(23)=1.07 p=0.30	accepted	O=17.83

¹O = overall mean.

Results Summary

The datasets obtained from youth member and adult mentor respondents for this study were used to explore survey constructs and items using exploratory factor and reliability analyses. In addition, these datasets were used to examine if youth member ratings of background and experience factors varied by cluster membership (high and low) by completing a cluster analysis. In other words, youth respondents indicating high mean scores (measured from low (1) to high (5)) for individual outcome factors were grouped in the high cluster for individual outcomes. Those reporting low mean scores for individual outcome factors were grouped in the low cluster. The following sections provide a summary of the results obtained from these analyses.

Validity and Reliability

The second purpose of this study was to test the factor structure of the theoretical constructs and the reliability of items used to measure youth member and adult mentor backgrounds, experiences and outcomes (individual and community). EFAs and scale reliability tests (Cronbach's Alpha) were performed to fulfill this purpose using the responses of youth members among three sets of constructs: 1) individual outcomes; 2) community outcomes; and 3) youth council experiences. These tests reduced the original 19 constructs and 69 items developed from the review of the literature and past MRPA-MML studies to 13 factors and 68 items. The factors that emerged from this analysis were then also applied to adult respondents. Results are summarized in Table 62.

Table 62. EFA Results Summary

	Youth Members		Adult Mentors		Differ- ence ²
	Mean ¹	Std. Dev.	Mean ¹	Std. Dev.	
Individual Outcome Factors					
Communication (6 items; $\alpha = .910$)	3.62	0.83	3.87	.920	.25
Networking and Leadership (7 items; $\alpha = .818$)	3.87	0.83	3.82	.817	-.05
Philanthropy (5 items; $\alpha = .849$)	3.89	0.91	3.85	.811	-.04
Community Activism (2 items; $\alpha = .696$)	4.00	0.87	NA	NA	NA
Future Political and Community Involvement (4 items; $\alpha = .544$)	4.27	.64	NA	NA	NA
Community Outcome Factors					
Youth Leadership and Hope (4 items)					
Performance ($\alpha = .860$)	3.72	.92	4.40	.598	.68
Importance ($\alpha = .788$)	4.42	.65	4.04	.765	-.38
Youth activities and services (8 items)					
Performance ($\alpha = .916$)	3.59	.90	4.39	.635	.80
Importance ($\alpha = .911$)	3.59	.90	3.86	.687	.27
Develop skills for the future (4 items)					
Performance ($\alpha = .834$)	3.37	.91	4.13	.625	.76
Importance ($\alpha = .807$)	3.73	.91	3.58	.754	-.15
Mentor Involvement Factor					
Mentor Involvement (14 items; $\alpha = .948$)	4.26	.72	4.19	.535	-.07
Youth Council Climate Factor					
Youth Council Climate (8 items; $\alpha = .925$)	4.39	.71	4.31	.761	-.08
Mentor/Parent Support Factors					
Talking about life (4 items)					
Mentor Support ($\alpha = .822$)	3.45	1.13	3.71	.795	.26
Parent Support ($\alpha = .786$)	4.24	.79	NA	NA	NA
Encouragement (4 items)					
Mentor Support ($\alpha = .828$)	4.21	.77	4.40	.504	.19
Parent Support ($\alpha = .844$)	4.25	.90	NA	NA	NA
Talking about community and federal issues (2 items)					
Parent Support ($\alpha = .850$)	3.69	1.09	NA	NA	NA

¹Mean based on 5 point Likert scale (strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5)).

²Difference = (Adult Mentor Mean) – (Youth Member Mean).

Establishing High and Low Rating Clusters

The third purpose of this study was to examine if youth member ratings of background and experience factors varied by cluster membership (high and low). In order to accomplish this, youth member factor scores were utilized to create two clusters based on both individual and community outcomes. In other words, respondents were grouped according to their reported level of outcomes (high or low) that resulted from their engagement in youth council groups. Pearson Chi-squares and t-tests were used to test whether (or not) the high and low rating clusters had different ratings of background characteristics and experiences.

Youth Council Experiences. The high and low rating clusters for both individual and community outcomes were used to examine if youth member ratings of experience factors varied by cluster membership. A total of 142 tests (48 t-tests and 94 Chi-square tests) were conducted to explore high and low cluster relationships. Thirty-four relationships were found to be statistically significant.

Table 63. Cluster Analysis Results Summary for Youth Council Experiences

	Outcome Clusters¹	
	Individual	Community
Youth Council Responsibilities (20 tests)		
Gaining skills in philanthropy	H > L	H > L
Gaining skills in communication	H > L	NSD
Number of roles held in youth council	H > L	NSD
Held chair/youth mayor/ president position	H > L	NSD
Held non-voting member/ participant position	L > H	NSD
Youth serve on local government commissions	H > L	NSD
Required to provide input on all children, youth and family issues	L > H	NSD
Held co- or vice-chair/ youth mayor position	NSD	H > L
Youth Council Makeup (40 tests)		
Youth council diversity - income	H > L	H > L
Youth council diversity - social	H > L	H > L
Youth council diversity – racial and ethnic backgrounds	NSD	H > L
Youth encourage youth from all backgrounds to participate	H > L	H > L
Adult mentors encourage youth from all backgrounds to participate	H > L	H > L
Youth council serves on local government	H > L	NSD
Youth council is a task group	L > H	L > H
Youth council reviews family issues	L > H	NSD
Extracurricular Activities (7 tests)		
Youth volunteer in their community	H > L	NSD
Participation in groups, clubs and/or teams	NSD	L > H
Volunteer activities required by school	NSD	L > H
Volunteer activities required by club or society	H > L	NSD
Mentor-Youth Interactions (3 tests)		
Mentor involvement	H > L	H > L
Mentor support - encouragement	H > L	H > L
Mentor support - talking about life	H > L	H > L
Youth Council Interactions (1 test)		
Youth council climate	H > L	H > L

¹H = high rating cluster; L = low rating cluster; NSD = no significant difference.

Youth Member and Organization Backgrounds. The high and low rating clusters for both individual and community outcomes were used to examine if youth member ratings of youth and organization background factors varied by cluster membership. A total of 62 statistical tests (48 t-tests and 14 Chi-square tests) were implemented to investigate high and low cluster relationships. Twelve of these relationships were found to be statistically significant.

Table 64. Cluster Analysis Results Summary for Youth and Organization Backgrounds

	Outcome Clusters¹	
	Individual	Community
Parent Influence (4 tests)		
Parent volunteer experience	H > L	H > L
Parent support - encouragement	H > L	NSD
Parent support – talking about life	H > L	H > L
Parent support – talking about community issues	NSD	H > L
Youth Households and Mobility (6 tests)		
Number of adults 18 years and older living in household	NSD	H > L
Years living in Michigan	NSD	H > L
Motivation for Involvement (3 tests)		
Joined for networking and leadership	H > L	H > L
Organization Background Factors (3 tests)		
Number of paid mentors	H > L	NSD
Number of volunteering mentors	NSD	H > L

¹H = high rating cluster; L = low rating cluster; NSD = no significant difference.

CHAPTER FIVE

DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Overview

This study was a cross-sectional examination of the experiences and perceived outcomes of youth members and adult mentors engaged in youth council groups located throughout the state of Michigan. Although other practice-oriented studies have investigated youth civic engagement as it exists in venues such as schools and families, this study is among the first to empirically explore youth council groups associated with community entities like local governments and park and recreation agencies. The review of the literature conducted for this project indicated that the past study of youth council groups has largely been qualitative in nature.

The first purpose of this study was to conduct a literature review of youth development and civic engagement studies to identify theoretical constructs that describe factors influencing engagement and positive youth development outcomes, and to develop items that could be used to measure those constructs. In order to fulfill this purpose, an in-depth literature review was implemented. After determining that there were no established scales addressing the engagement of youth in decision-making, 17 constructs and 69 unique survey items were adapted from studies that were examined during the literature review.

The second purpose of this study was to test the factor structure of the theoretical constructs and the reliability of items used to measure youth member and adult mentor backgrounds, experiences and outcomes (individual and

community). Consequently, a series of exploratory factor analyses (EFA) and scale reliability tests (using Cronbach's Alpha) were performed using SPSS based on youth responses. As a result of both these analyses, 68 of the 69 original items were retained and 13 factors emerged. While the factors identified in this study had high face validity, future research efforts are needed to further explore and develop these factors for empirical research use. In particular, the factors need to be tested among greater numbers of both youth and adult respondents than were involved in this study. Additionally, the *Future Political and Community Involvement* factor still requires development in order to better measure youths' intentions to be active in their communities in the future (i.e. propensity to vote, volunteer with a political organization in their community, participate in community service).

The third purpose of this study was to examine if youth member ratings of background and experience factors varied by cluster membership (high and low) by exploring the following questions:

- a. Do youth member ratings of mentor/organization background characteristics differ between high and low clusters for both individual and community outcome factors?
- b. Do youth member ratings of youth council experiences differ between high and low clusters for both individual and community outcome factors?

Youth member factor scores were used to group respondents into two clusters according to their reported level of outcomes (high or low) that resulted

from their engagement in youth council groups. For example, a respondent reporting a high level of outcomes was placed in the high cluster, whereas a respondent reporting comparatively lower levels of outcomes was placed in the low cluster. The number of respondents in each cluster for individual outcomes was as follows: high (n=50) and low (n=13). The number of respondents in each cluster for community outcomes was as follows: high (n=40) and low (n=24). Next, Pearson Chi-squares and t-tests were used to test whether (or not) the high and low rating clusters had different ratings of background characteristics and experiences. In all, 100 t-tests and 108 Pearson Chi-square tests were conducted.

Key Findings

- Youth members and adult mentors were asked to rate the importance of achieving three community outcomes (factors) through involvement in youth councils: 1) youth leadership and hope; 2) youth activities and services; and 3) develop skills for the future. Youth members rated the importance of *youth leadership and hope* highest among community outcome factors (mean=4.42; std. dev.=.65). Although adult mentors also rated the importance of *youth leadership and hope* highest when compared with the other two community outcome factors (mean=4.04; std. dev.=.77), they rated it lower than youth members ((adult mean) – (youth mean) = -.38).
- Youth members and adult mentors were also asked to rate their youth council's performance regarding the same three community outcomes: 1) youth leadership and hope; 2) youth activities and services; and 3) develop

skills for the future. Youth members rated their council's performance in *youth leadership and hope* highest when compared with the other two community outcome factors (mean=3.72; std. dev.=.92). Likewise, adult mentors rated their council's performance in *youth leadership and hope* highest among the three community outcome factors (mean=4.40; std. dev=.92). Adult mentors rated performance in *youth leadership and hope* higher than youth members ((adult mean) – (youth mean)=.68).

- Youth members in high rating clusters for both individual and community outcomes rated *mentor-youth interactions* significantly higher than youth in low rating clusters for all three mentor-youth interaction factors: 1) mentor involvement; 2) mentor support – encouragement and 3) mentor support – talking about life. The mentor-youth relationship was also found to enhance outcomes in other previous studies. For example, NFER-CELS found that schools appeared to be most successful in developing citizenship education where positive relationships existed between adults and youth (Kerr et al., 2004).
- Youth members in high rating clusters for both individual and community outcomes rated the *youth council climate* factor significantly higher than youth in the low rating clusters. Youth council climate items such as respecting the opinions of others and enjoying well-organized meetings and activities have also been suggested to improve outcomes by scholars. In particular, Camino and Zeldin (2002) and Kerr et al. (2004) named adult openness and respect for student opinions as key factors in a youth's sense of belonging to and

participation in their school or organization. Additionally, Zeldin et al. found in interviewing fifteen organizations throughout the United States that youth felt they would not be able to continue their engagement in decision-making if the “meetings were boring and without clear purpose and excitement” (2000, p. 26).

- Youth members in high rating clusters for both individual and community outcomes indicated that their parents or guardians volunteered in their community significantly more often than the parents or guardians of youth in the low rating clusters. Similarly, it has been reported in recent studies that the community involvement activities of a young person’s parents are a significant predictor of their own engagement in community youth groups and the strongest predictor of their own future community and civic engagement during early to middle adulthood (Chan and Elder, 2001). It has also been suggested that adolescents often share their parents’ views on important social issues such as morality, educational goals, politics and religion (Eccles, 1999).
- Youth members in high rating clusters for both individual and community outcomes rated the *parent support – talking about life* factor significantly higher than youth in the low rating clusters. Youth members in the high rating community outcome cluster also rated *parent support – talking about community issues* and those in the high rating individual cluster rated *parent support – encouragement* significantly higher than youth in their respective low rating clusters. These findings appear to support the research of others.

For example, Pittman et al. (2001) suggest that the impact of youth engagement can be amplified or dampened by what is going on in young people's families. Accordingly, youth members in this study who reported experiencing positive outcomes in their youth councils also reported having strong family support.

- Youth members in the high rating cluster for individual outcomes showed a significant relationship with holding a greater number of roles in their youth council, holding the chair/youth mayor/president position and serving on local government commissions than youth in the low rating cluster. In addition, those youth in the low rating cluster for individual outcomes displayed a significant relationship with the non-voting member/participant position.
- Youth members in the high rating clusters for both individual and community outcomes rated *youth council diversity – income* and *youth council diversity – social* significantly higher than those youth in the low rating clusters. Youth from the high rating cluster for community outcomes also rated *youth council diversity – racial and ethnic backgrounds* significantly higher than youth in the low rating cluster.
- Youth members in the high rating clusters for both individual and community outcomes rated *youth members encourage youth from all background to participate* and *adult mentors encourage youth from all backgrounds to participate* significantly higher than youth from the low rating clusters.

Limitations

Several limitations to this study exist. Most problematic was the low survey response rates. In addition, difficulty was experienced in establishing a list of active youth councils in the state, in the implementation of a web-based survey and in designing the survey items (given no previous empirical studies of this nature). Specific study limitations include the following points:

- Youth council groups were first contacted in Spring 2005 when school was coming to an end. Several adult mentors who were asked to participate in the study expressed that summer months are not the most ideal time to conduct a study with youth councils. One of the most commonly mentioned reasons was that some councils adjourn for the summer, making it difficult to make contact with youth members and thus difficult to encourage them to participate in a study.
- Both populations (youth members and adult mentors) that were targeted in this study have limited time in general to devote to special projects such as this one. It was frequently articulated by adult mentors that they had few opportunities during their busy working hours to dedicate to participating in a study of this magnitude, especially amid present funding and staffing cuts taking place throughout the state. Similarly, several adult mentors voiced their skepticism in obtaining a high response from youth members because of the large proportion of them who seemed to be involved in multiple extracurricular activities. Consequently, it is likely that youth members could also find little time to set aside for involvement in the study.

- Of the 33 youth councils that participated in this study, only 24 had both adult mentor and youth member respondents. It would have been ideal, however, to obtain a representative sample from each council in order to better compare and contrast the responses of adult mentors and youth members and to enhance the ability to generalize with reference to all youth councils in Michigan.
- The small number of respondents in this study made it difficult to conduct EFAs. Although the factors identified in this study had high face validity, a larger number of respondents would have assisted in obtaining greater empirical evidence.
- There was no known list of youth councils that were primarily associated with parks and recreation agencies or local governments. Therefore, councils were only identified as potential participants for this study by their past involvement in MRPA-MML studies or attendance at previous MRPA-MML Youth Symposiums. Accordingly, those councils without experience in any of these activities were not included in the study.
- Youth councils associated with the Michigan Community Foundation were asked to participate in this study if their foundation presented information about them on their website. Consequently, those councils without representation on a foundation's website were excluded from the study.
- While the online survey option was a valuable addition to the study, there was a period of at least twenty-four hours during which it was unavailable to study participants due to technical difficulties. Thus, it is likely that several

individuals were unable to participate in the study because of their attempt to complete the survey during this time.

Recommendations for Youth Councils

- The majority of youth councils reported forming partnerships with other organizations and decision making bodies at the local level. On the other hand, only 6.1% (2 groups) indicated maintaining a connection with the state government. In order to continue increasing the ability of youth to improve the quality of life for themselves and their families, it is important that councils seek to form meaningful relationships with groups making decisions about youth issues at the regional, state and even national levels.
- The youth councils examined in this study were composed of a fairly homogeneous group of youth members. For example, youth respondents most commonly reported being White (82.0%), living in a two parent household (94.4%), living in their present communities for the majority of their lives (12.6 years), earning C grades or better (100.0%) and planning to attend college after their graduation from high school (100.0%). Additionally, youth members indicated that they participated in an average of 3.7 groups, clubs or teams throughout the school year other than the youth council. In an attempt to represent all youth in the community, it is essential that both youth council members and adult mentors make concerted efforts to recruit youth with all abilities, backgrounds, interests and with varying aspirations for their post high school years. As Zeldin et al. note, it will be vital to reach out to all youth as the youth engagement movement continues, to ensure that all young

people are given the opportunity to be engaged in decision-making in organizations (2000).

- Youth members in the high rating cluster for individual outcomes had a significantly greater number of paid adult mentors working with their youth council. This finding suggests that it is worthwhile for organizations to invest their human and/or monetary resources into support and training for adult mentors working with youth councils.
- Youth members in high rating clusters for individual outcomes rated the *parent support – encouragement* and *parent support – talking about life* factors significantly higher than youth in the low rating clusters. Consistent with other previous research, this finding implies that the quality of parent-child relationships has a profound impact on adolescent development. Accordingly, it is important for youth council groups to reach out to parents in order to enhance the experiences and outcomes for youth council members. For example, it may be effective to educate parents about the importance of empowering youth to make positive changes in their lives through constructive partnerships with adults. Youth council organizers could urge parents to support their teen's development by listening to and sharing ideas and opinions, providing guidance in overcoming daily obstacles, encouraging involvement in positive community activities and assisting in the development of plans for their teen's future.
- This research provides additional evidence that the involvement and support of local governments in partnering with youth to make important community

decisions is a worthwhile investment. Youth in this study reported gaining skills and experiences that will assist them in becoming productive and engaged adult citizens. For example, youth respondents believed that as a result of their involvement in the youth council they could write a letter to a community leader about an issue that was important to them, attend a public meeting, conduct research on a community issue and give a presentation or speak to a community leader. In addition, youth respondents believed that the work of their youth council helped to increase youth leadership and hope, improve youth activities and services and assist youth in developing skills for the future within their communities. As Huber et al (2003) note, the advancement of youth education, skills and assets through community engagement opportunities will ultimately help to build human capital within the community. The very same dedication of resources that help youth to become productive citizens, therefore, also helps to kindle economic growth and attract businesses (Huber et al., 2003).

Recommendations for Future Research

- Only 24 of the 33 youth councils that participated in this study had both youth and adult mentor respondents. Seven of these groups had only youth respondents (no adults) and two had only adult mentor respondents (no youth). It is important that future studies obtain representation of both youth members and adult mentors for each youth council group. A more complete representation of youth councils would increase the ability to generalize the study's findings.
- Almost half of youth council members (49.3%) and adult mentors (44.1%) who participated in this study were from the Southeast region of Michigan. In addition, a greater number of groups were from metropolitan areas (n=25) than from rural areas (n=8). It is important that future studies strive to recruit youth councils from all geographic regions in their study area.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

PREVIOUS STUDIES ON MICHIGAN YOUTH COUNCILS

Engaging Youth in Community Decision-Making Study

In the Fall of 2002, researchers at MSU, MRPA and MML partnered to gather information that would provide insights on how to engage youth meaningfully in communities and to increase their organizations' capacity to positively impact community youth development. During the first phase of the Engaging Youth in Community Decision-Making Study, qualitative data were collected from over 300 people from Michigan's 16 U.S. Congressional Districts who were attending the Michigan State University Extension (MSUE) 4-H 2001-2002 Regional Conversations on Youth Development in the 21st Century, 189 youth and adults attending the State Conversation on Youth Development in the 21st Century and 123 youth, community leaders and recreation professionals attending the 2002 MRPA-MML Youth Symposium.

These data, along with a thorough literature review, were then used during phase two of the study to develop a pair of mail-back questionnaires – one for youth and one for adult community leaders – designed to measure youth issues, necessary community actions, youth involvement in general out-of-school activities, adult and youth involvement in decision-making groups, funding for youth initiatives and demographic characteristics. After the distribution of the questionnaires to 264 Michigan communities identified from MRPA and MML membership lists, data from 380 adults (Mayors, City Managers, Park and Recreation Directors and Youth Workers) and 113 youth were analyzed and reported.

Michigan Youth Council Information Request

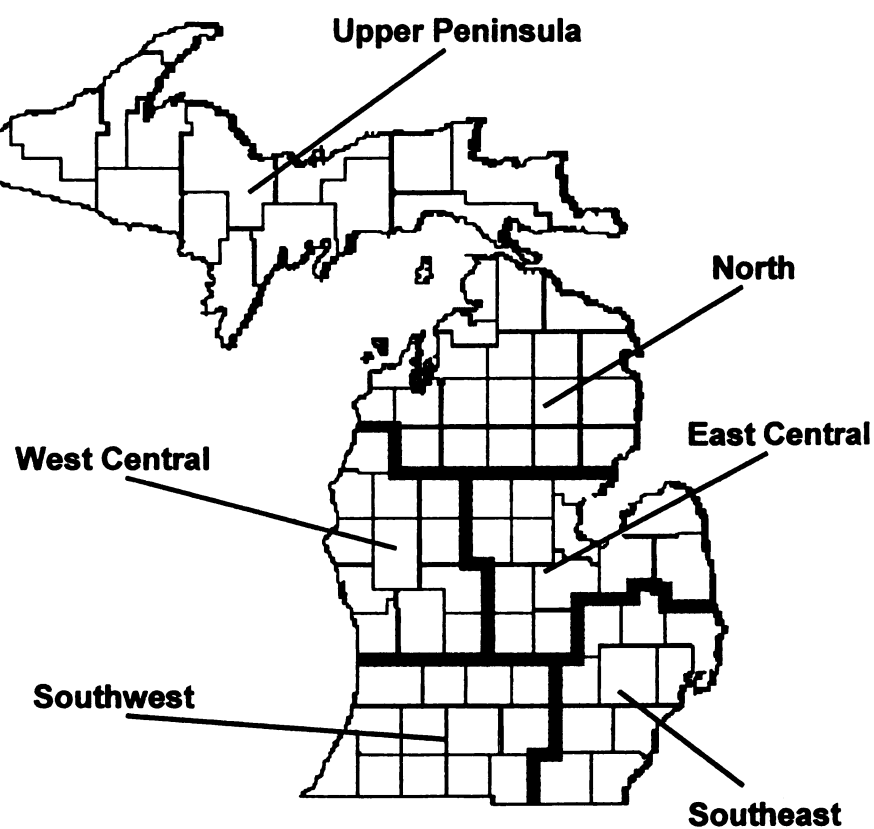
In the Fall of 2004, MRPA and MML conducted the Michigan Youth Council Information Request to obtain an inventory of youth councils throughout Michigan with some technical assistance from researchers at Michigan State University (MSU). This inventory involved both youth council members and adult mentors. It was developed to gather basic information on Michigan youth councils engaged in decision-making with community organizations and local governments. Both youth and adult mentors were asked general information about their youth council (i.e. name of council and city/town, council meeting schedule, types of council subcommittees). In addition, respondents were informed that a study could be conducted at a later date and asked if their community would be willing to participate. MRPA and MML offered this inventory of youth councils to be used in the present study.

APPENDIX B

SIX MICHIGAN REGIONS AS DEFINED BY MICHIGAN STATE UNIVERSITY EXTENSION

Six Michigan Regions

Figure 1. Six Michigan Regions as Defined by Michigan State University Extension (as of Spring 2005)



Source: www.msue.msu.edu

APPENDIX C

INITIAL CONTACT MATERIALS

Initial Contact Email

SUBJECT: ATTN: Youth Council Mentor

Dear [ADULT MENTOR],

We need your help once again! Last fall (2004) you participated in the Michigan Youth Council Information Request. Michigan State University (MSU), Michigan Municipal League (MML), and Michigan Recreation and Park Association (MRPA) need your help again with a follow-up study, called the 2005 Michigan Youth Council Study, to understand youth involvement in decision-making in communities and in youth councils, like yours, throughout the state of Michigan.

The ONLINE SURVEY is available at www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/adult
(If this link does not work, try to cut and paste it into your browser.)

A FEW THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- (1.) Encourage youth council members/participants and other adult mentors to participate in this study so your youth council can qualify for the drawing for up to 10 FREE youth and 2 adult registrations for the next MRPA-MML Youth Symposium.
- (2.) Both youth and adults can find more information and connect to the online surveys from the study's website: www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/

PRIZE DRAWINGS

Double your chances to win an iPod Shuffle!
There will be one youth and one adult winner for each iPod shuffle drawing!

Complete and return your survey by: [DATE]

- (1.) Early Bird Drawing for iPod shuffle: [DATE]
- (2.) Second Drawing for iPod shuffle AND drawing for free youth symposium registration: [DATE]
- (3.) Visit www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/ for details on prize drawings!

Sincerely,

Ellen Rinck, Graduate Research Assistant
Phone: (517)432-0288
Email: rinckell@msu.edu

Dr. Dwayne Baker, Assistant Professor
Phone: 517-432-0278
Email: dbaker@msu.edu

Initial Contact Form

MICHIGAN YOUTH COUNCIL STUDY

Dear Youth Council Adult Mentor Contact Person:

We need your help in gathering the email addresses of youth council members and adults who participated in your youth council during the past school year. For your convenience, we have created an online resource page for this study: <http://www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc>.

You may email your youth council's information by typing it into your message or by attaching your own file (i.e., MS Word or Excel). If you prefer, you can also fax or mail your completed form to Ellen Rinck (contact information below).

YOU MAY TYPE YOUR INFORMATION INTO THE FORM BELOW (WORD FORMAT ONLY),
SAVE AND EMAIL, FAX OR MAIL TO RESEARCHERS AT MSU.

ATTN: Ellen Rinck, Graduate Research Assistant
Email: rinckell@msu.edu
Fax: (517) 432-3597
Phone: (517) 432-0288
Address: Michigan State University
Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation, and Resource Studies
131 Natural Resources Building, East Lansing, MI 48824

MICHIGAN YOUTH COUNCIL STUDY 2005

SECTION A: YOUR GENERAL YOUTH COUNCIL INFORMATION

Community Name: _____

Youth Council Name: _____

Please enter the number of youth council members and adult mentors in your youth council. → # of youth council members _____
of adult mentors (including you) _____

Please place an X next to one of the following choices:

_____ Online participation – complete section B.

_____ Mail participation – complete section C.

SECTION B: ONLINE

Youth Council Members

	First Name	First Initial of Last Name	Email
1.			
2.			
3.			
4.			
5.			
6.			
7.			
8.			
9.			
10.			
11.			
12.			
13.			
14.			
15.			

Adult Mentors (Please enter contact information for yourself AND for other adult mentors involved with your youth council below.)

	First Name	Last Name	Email
You			
Mentor 2			
Mentor 3			

SECTION C: BY MAIL

Please send paper copies of the surveys, permission forms and other information to the following address:

STREET: _____

CITY, STATE, ZIP: _____

PHONE: _____ FAX: _____

APPENDIX D

PARTICIPATION BY MAIL: INSTRUCTIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Protocol

[DATE]

[ADDRESS]

[CITY], [STATE] [ZIP]

Dear [ADULT MENTOR]:

Thank you again for agreeing to participate in this study!

According to our correspondence and/or the information your community provided to the Michigan Recreation and Parks Association or the Michigan Municipal League, you have:

- 1) _____ # of youth council members
- 2) _____ # of adult youth council mentors/liaisons

Based on this information, this packet includes the following:

- 1) _____ # of parental permission forms
- 2) _____ # of youth assent forms
- 3) _____ # of youth council member questionnaires
- 4) _____ # of adult youth council mentor questionnaires
- 5) _____ # of small envelopes
- 6) _____ # of youth online participation flyers
- 7) _____ # of adult online participation flyers

Please distribute the parental permission forms, youth assent forms and questionnaires as follows:

Parental Permission Forms:

As soon as possible, please ask each youth council member to take a parental permission form home. It is important to get all of these forms back signed by a parent or guardian, indicating whether they consent or not to their child's participation in this study. Please ask youth members to return this permission form as soon as possible to you once their parent has signed it. Please remind the youth that we cannot include them in the study (including prize drawings) unless they have returned a completed parental permission form.

Youth Council Member Assent Forms:

Every youth council member who returns a signed parental permission form that indicates their parent/guardian consented to their participation in this study needs to ALSO complete a youth assent form either agreeing or declining to participate in this study.

Questionnaires:**Youth Members:**

Only those youth who have returned **BOTH** a parental permission form and youth assent form that indicates they can participate in the study should be asked to complete the youth questionnaire.

Please remind them that their participation in this study is voluntary and there is no consequence for not participating. Also, this is NOT a test - there are no wrong answers. Please ask them to answer each question with their own opinion. Every individual respondent's opinions are important, however, individual responses will not be identified. Results will only be reported by group. It should take approximately 15 minutes for youth to complete this questionnaire.

When the youth have completed their questionnaire, ask them to place it in their own small envelope we have provided and seal the envelope. Please make sure that these sealed envelopes are placed in the self-addressed and stamped priority mail envelope and mailed as soon as possible.

Additional Notes:

We have attached a *Distribution Checklist Form* to assist you in the distribution and collection of the parental permission forms and questionnaires. Make a copy of this list for your records and return one copy with the completed questionnaires and consent/assent forms.

Youth council members and adult mentors may still choose to complete this survey online. We have enclosed a copy(ies) of a *youth flyer* and *adult flyer* that you may distribute. These flyers direct youth and adults to the online survey and study website.

Please inform youth that we will be sharing the entire report with all youth councils that participate in this study. We will be sending all adult mentors an electronic version of the final report that you can share with them. You may find this report and other study information at www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/

Thanks again for agreeing to distribute, collect and mail us the completed parental permission and youth assent forms, and making sure we receive all of the completed questionnaires. If you have any questions or concerns, please do not hesitate to contact either me (office phone: (517) 432-0278; cell phone (517) 410-0241; email: dbaker@msu.edu) or my graduate student, Ellen Rinck (office phone: (517) 432-0288; email: rinckell@msu.edu).

Sincerely,



Dr. Dwayne Baker
c/o Rm 131 Natural Resources Bldg
East Lansing, MI 48824-1222
Fax: (517) 432-3597

Distribution Checklist Form

- 1) Record the name of each youth that receives a parental permission form, youth assent form, and questionnaire.
- 2) Place a check ✓ in the appropriate column once you have received the completed parental permission and youth assent forms and/or questionnaire.
- 3) Please remind youth who have not returned either their completed parental permission form, youth assent form, or questionnaire.
- 4) After receiving all of the completed permission forms and questionnaires, please return all of these forms and questionnaires in the enclosed large priority mail addressed postage paid envelope. Include this form in the envelope. (You may want to save a copy of the completed form for your records.)
- 5) Mail all forms and questionnaires to: Dr. Dwayne Baker, c/o Rm 131 Natural Resources Bldg, East Lansing, MI 48824-1222

Youth Council Members						
	First Name	First Initial of Last Name	E-Mail	Status		
				Completed Parental Permission Form Received	Completed Youth Assent Form Received	Completed Questionnaire Received
1						
2						
3						
4						
5						
6						
7						
8						
9						
10						
11						
12						
13						
14						
15						
16						
17						
18						
19						
20						
Adult Mentors						
	First Name	Last Name	E-Mail	Phone Number	Completed Questionnaire Received	
1						
2						
3						
4						

Reminder Email

SUBJECT: Youth Council Study – LAST CHANCE!

Dear [ADULT MENTOR]:

Recently you were sent a 2005 Michigan Youth Council Study packet including surveys and permission forms. Help us make one last effort to learn as much as we can about youth councils in Michigan! If you have not already sent your completed surveys and forms back to researchers at MSU, now is the time to do so! Return surveys on or before [DATE] to be entered to win an iPod shuffle or free registration to the next MRPA-MML Youth Symposium!

Remember - you find all study information and link to the online survey from the study's website: www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/

Thank you for your participation!!

**Ellen Rinck, Graduate Research Assistant
Phone: (517)432-0288
Email: rinckell@msu.edu**

**Dr. Dwayne Baker, Assistant Professor
Email: dbaker@msu.edu
Phone: 517-432-0278**

APPENDIX E

ONLINE PARTICIPATION: INSTRUCTIONS AND COMMUNICATIONS

Email to Adult Contact

SUBJECT: Youth Council Study Online Participation

Dear [ADULT MENTOR],

As promised, I am sending a copy of an email (below) that you may forward to your youth council members to invite them to participate in the 2005 Michigan Youth Council Study. In addition, you will find two flyers attached in PDF format:

1. A youth flyer that you can distribute to your youth council members to ask them to participate in the study online.
2. An adult flyer that you can distribute to other adult mentors.

You may also download these flyers, as well as other study documents, in both PDF AND MS Word formats at www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/ (if this link does not work, try to cut and paste it into your browser)

SOME THINGS TO REMEMBER:

1. Complete your own adult mentor survey at www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/adult
2. Remind your youth council members that their parent/guardian must submit a parental permission form in order to be included in this study.

Thank you for your participation!!

Ellen Rinck
Graduate Research Assistant
Phone: (517)432-0288
Email: rinckell@msu.edu

Email to Youth Council Members

Dear Youth Council Member:

We need your help! Michigan State University (MSU), Michigan Municipal League (MML), and Michigan Recreation and Park Association (MRPA) need your help with a study to understand youth involvement in decision-making in communities and in youth councils, like yours, throughout the state of Michigan.

The ONLINE SURVEY is available at www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/youth

A FEW THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- (1.) Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.
- (2.) Your **parent/guardian** must complete a parental permission form in order for you to be included in this study. They may complete this form online or print & mail or fax it. Directions can be found at www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/
- (3.) When you visit the online questionnaire, you will first be prompted to complete your own assent form. If you agree to participate, you will be taken to the online questionnaire that will take 10-15 minutes to complete.
- (4.) Encourage other youth council members/participants and adult mentors to participate in this study so your youth council can qualify for the **drawing for up to 10 FREE youth and 2 adult registrations for the next MRPA-MML Youth Symposium.**
- (5.) You may also participate in this study by mail. Ask your adult mentor or visit www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/ for details.

PRIZE DRAWINGS

Double your chances to win an iPod Shuffle!
Complete and return your survey by: [DATE]

- (1.) Early Bird Drawing for iPod shuffle: [DATE]
- (2.) Second Drawing for iPod shuffle AND drawing for free youth symposium registration: [DATE]
- (3.) Visit www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/ for details on prize drawings!

Sincerely,

Ellen Rinck, Graduate Research Assistant
Email: rinckell@msu.edu
Phone: 517-432-0288

Dr. Dwayne Baker, Assistant Professor
Email: dbaker@msu.edu
Phone: 517-432-0278

Adult Reminder Email

SUBJECT: Youth Council Study – LAST CHANCE!

Dear [ADULT MENTOR],

Recently you were asked to help contact youth and adults involved in your community's youth council to participate in the 2005 Michigan Youth Council Study. We are asking for your help once again to remind youth and adults who have not yet responded to participate in the study.

LAST CHANCE: Help us make one last effort to learn as much as we can about youth councils in Michigan! Return surveys on or before [DATE] and be entered to win an iPod shuffle or free registration to the next MRPA-MML Youth Symposium!

UPDATE: To date, our records show the following:

**Youth who have responded:
[LIST OF YOUTH]**

**Adults who have responded:
[LIST OF ADULTS]**

You may inform both youth and adults that they can link to the online survey from the study's website: www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/ Also, you will find a copy of an email (below) that you may forward to your youth council members to remind them to participate in the study.

Thank you for your participation!!

**Ellen Rinck, Graduate Research Assistant
Phone: (517)432-0288
Email: rinckell@msu.edu**

**Dr. Dwayne Baker, Assistant Professor
Email: dbaker@msu.edu
Phone: 517-432-0278**

Youth Reminder Email

SUBJECT: Youth Council Study – LAST CHANCE!!

Dear Youth Council Member:

LAST CHANCE: Complete your survey on or before [DATE] and be entered to win an iPod shuffle and free registration to the next MRPA-MML Youth Symposium!

Recently you were asked to help in collecting some information about youth councils in Michigan in regards to a study we are conducting in partnership with Michigan Municipal League (MML), and Michigan Recreation and Park Association (MRPA). To date, we have not yet heard from you but are still very much interested in hearing about the youth council in your community!

The ONLINE SURVEY is available at www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/youth
(If this link does not work, try to cut and paste it into your browser.)

A FEW THINGS TO REMEMBER:

- (1.) Your participation in this study is completely voluntary.
- (2.) Your **parent/guardian** must complete a parental permission form in order for you to be included in this study. They may complete this form online or print & mail or fax it. Directions can be found at www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/
- (3.) When you visit the online questionnaire, you will first be prompted to complete your own assent form. If you agree to participate, you will be taken to the online questionnaire that will take 10-15 minutes to complete.
- (4.) Encourage other youth council members/participants and adult mentors to participate in this study so your youth council can qualify for the **drawing for up to 10 FREE youth and 2 adult registrations for the next MRPA-MML Youth Symposium.**
- (5.) You may also participate in this study by mail. Ask your adult mentor or visit www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/ for details.

PRIZE DRAWINGS

- (1.) Drawing for iPod shuffle AND drawing for free youth symposium registration: [DATE]
- (2.) Visit www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/ for details on prize drawings!

Sincerely,

Ellen Rinck, Graduate Research Assistant
Email: rinckell@msu.edu
Phone: 517-432-0288

Dr. Dwayne Baker, Assistant Professor
Email: dbaker@msu.edu
Phone: 517-432-0278

APPENDIX F

YOUTH ASSENT AND PARENTAL PERMISSION FORMS

Youth Assent Form

Youth Assent Form Michigan Youth Council Study

The Michigan Recreation and Park Association (MRPA), the Michigan Municipal League (MML), and Michigan State University (MSU) are conducting research to identify the ways that youth are involved in decision-making in communities throughout Michigan. This research is an effort to understand: (1) factors that impact youth involvement in youth council activities, including support from family, peers and adult mentors; (2) organization and function of youth councils; (3) outcomes of youth council activities to improve quality of life for youth and families in their community; and (3) youth involvement in extracurricular and community activities. Your participation in the Michigan Youth Council Survey will help youth professionals, programmers, and policy makers in Michigan better understand how youth councils are involved in decision-making in their communities and their impact on the issues facing youth in your community. In addition, this study will be used to solicit funding and other support for future youth council activities.

Procedure

You have been selected as a potential participant in this study because of your involvement in a community-based 'youth council.' With your consent, you will be given a questionnaire by a youth council adult mentor during one of your council meetings. If you have received this form, your parent also has already agreed that you can participate in this study. The questionnaire will take 15-20 minutes to complete.

There is no cost and there should be no risks involved in answering these questions. Once you have completed the questionnaire, you will be asked to place the questionnaire into a postage-paid addressed envelope that will be returned unopened to researchers at Michigan State University. Your questionnaire does not have any identification number on it to ensure that your responses are confidential. Youth who return this completed parental permission form and their assent form, either agreeing or declining to participate, will be included in a drawing for a MP3 player (valued at less than \$100). Your first name and the initial of your last name will be included on a separate form by an adult youth council mentor to the principal investigator. This list, along with the parent/guardian name included on your parental consent form and your community name will be used to enter you into the drawing. It is not possible for the researchers or anyone else to connect this list or your parent/guardian name to your questionnaire. The compiled information used to include you in the drawing will be destroyed immediately after the drawing.

Your consent to participate in this study is completely voluntary.

Even though your parent(s) have consented to your participation in this study, you may refuse to participate without penalty. Even if you agree to participate in this study, you can refuse to answer any or all of the questions on the survey without penalty. The study report will be posted when it is finalized on the study's website: www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/

Every effort will be made to ensure complete confidentiality of all responses and records.

No one but the researchers will ever see anyone's individual responses and these will not be reported. Only group statistics (e.g., by community size: small, midsize, or large) will be reported. Your privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Dwayne Baker, Assistant Professor in the Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation, and Resource Studies by phone: (517) 432-0278, fax: (517) 432-3597, e-mail: dbaker@msu.edu, or regular mail: 131 Natural Resources Building, East Lansing, MI 48824. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact— anonymously, if you wish—Dr. Peter Vasilenko, Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Statement of Consent or Dissent

Please check only one. Please print clearly.

☐ I, _____ (please print your name), do not want to participate in this study.

Your signature below indicates your refusal to participate in the study described above.

☐ I, _____ (please print your name), agree to participate in this study.

Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement to participate in the study described above.

Signature of youth

Date

Two copies of this consent form have been included. Please sign this copy and return it to _____, your adult youth council mentor, and keep the other copy for your records.

Parental Permission Form

Parental Permission Form Michigan Youth Council Study

Michigan Recreation and Park Association (MRPA), Michigan Municipal League (MML), and Michigan State University (MSU) are conducting research to identify the ways that youth are involved in decision-making in communities throughout Michigan. This research is an effort to understand: (1) factors that impact youth involvement in youth council activities, including support from family, peers and adult mentors; (2) organization and function of youth councils; (3) outcomes of youth council activities to improve quality of life for youth and families in their community; and (3) youth involvement in extracurricular and community activities. Your child's participation in the **Michigan Youth Council Survey** will help youth professionals, programmers, and policy makers in Michigan better understand how youth councils are involved in decision-making in their communities and their impact on the issues facing youth in your community. In addition, this study will be used to solicit funding and other support for future youth council activities.

Procedure

Your child has been selected as a potential participant in this survey as a result of his/her involvement in a community-based 'youth council.' With your consent, your child would be given a questionnaire during one of their youth council meetings. Your child will also be asked to sign an assent form agreeing or declining to participate in this study. A copy of this parental permission form and the assent form are attached for your records.

There is no cost and should not be any risk involved in answering these questions. The questionnaire will take 15-20 minutes to complete. Once your child has filled in his/her answers, he/she will be asked to place the questionnaire into a postage-paid addressed envelope that will be returned unopened to researchers at Michigan State University. Your child's questionnaire will not have any identification number on it to ensure that their confidentiality. Youth who return this completed parental permission form and their assent form agreeing or declining to participate will be included in a drawing for a MP3 player (valued at less than \$100). Your child's first name and the initial of their last name will be included on a separate form by an adult youth council mentor to the principal investigator. This list, along with the parent/guardian name written on the present form and your child's community name will be used to enter your child into the drawing. It is not possible for the researchers or anyone else to connect this list or the parent/guardian name written on the present form to your child's questionnaire. The compiled information used to include your child in the drawing will be destroyed immediately after the drawing.

Your consent for your child to participate in this survey and your child's consent to participate in this survey is completely voluntary.

You may refuse to allow your child to participate in the Michigan Youth Council Survey without penalty. Even with your consent, your child will be asked to complete an assent form either agreeing or declining to participate in this study. Even if you and your child agree to participate in this study, your child may refuse to answer any or all of the questions on the survey without penalty. The complete questionnaire is available for your review either from the adult youth council members or on the study's website: www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/ This website will also be used to post the study report when it is finalized.

Every effort will be made to ensure complete confidentiality of all responses and records.

No one but the researchers will ever see anyone's individual responses. Statistics will not be reported by individual and will only be reported by group. Your child's privacy will be protected to the maximum extent allowable by law.

Questions or Concerns

If you have any questions about this study, please contact Dwayne Baker, Assistant Professor in the Department of Community, Agriculture, Recreation, and Resource Studies by phone: (517) 432-0278, fax: (517) 432-3597, e-mail: dbaker@msu.edu, or regular mail: 131 Natural Resources Building, East Lansing, MI 48824. If you have questions or concerns regarding your rights as a study participant, or are dissatisfied at any time with any aspect of this study, you may contact— anonymously, if you wish—Dr. Peter Vasilenko, Chair of the University Committee on Research Involving Human Subjects (UCRIHS) by phone: (517) 355-2180, fax: (517) 432-4503, e-mail: ucrihs@msu.edu, or regular mail: 202 Olds Hall, East Lansing, MI 48824.

Statement of Consent or Dissent

Please check only one. Please print clearly.

☐ I **do not** want my child, _____ (please print child's name), involved in this survey.

Your signature below indicates your refusal for your child to participate in the study described above.

☐ I **give permission** for my child, _____ (please print child's name), to be involved in this survey.

Your signature below indicates your voluntary agreement for your child to participate in the study described above.

Signature of parent/guardian

Date

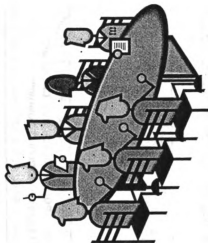
Two copies of this consent form have been included. Please sign this copy and return it as soon as possible to _____, your child's adult youth council mentor, and keep the other copy for your records.

APPENDIX G

YOUTH AND ADULT SURVEYS

Michigan Youth Council Questionnaire

YOUTH VERSION



Dear Youth Council Member,

The information from this survey will be used to help the Michigan Recreation and Park Association (MRPA) and the Michigan Municipal League (MML) gain insight about Michigan youth councils.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. Your responses will be kept confidential and at no time will your name be identified with any results. Please remember to complete and return both the youth assent form and the parent permission form. Please complete and return your survey as soon as possible so that you can be entered in the drawing for an iPod and free registration for the next Youth Symposium!

Please note that you can also complete this survey online at www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/youth

If you have questions about the survey, please contact Dr. Dwayne Baker at Michigan State University; (517) 432-0278; Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies; Michigan State University, 131 Natural Resources Bldg., East Lansing, MI 48824



SECTION 1: Activity Participation

1. Please indicate if you participated in each of the following groups, clubs or teams during this school year (2004-2005) or past summer (2004) by marking <i>I participated</i> . Next, please indicate if you held a leadership position (examples: captain, president, chairperson, other committee/group leader) at any point during your participation in that group, club or team by marking <i>I held a leadership position</i> .		
Potential groups, clubs or teams:	I participated (Please <i>mark ALL</i> that apply)	I held a leadership position (Please <i>mark ALL</i> that apply)
a. School or student council	☐	☐
b. Sports team, league or club	☐	☐
c. Performing or visual arts club or group (examples: music, band, dance, studio arts, computer graphics)	☐	☐
d. Faith-based or religious club or group	☐	☐
e. Community-service club or group	☐	☐
f. Environmental/nature-based club or group	☐	☐
g. Other club or group (please specify) _____	☐	☐

2. For each of the following examples, please indicate how often you have volunteered during this school year (2004-2005) or past summer (2004).

I have volunteered....	Never	Once a Month or Less	A Couple Times a Month	At Least Once a Week
a. At a school (examples: helper, tutor, mentor, fundraising)	☐	☐	☐	☐
b. As a coach, manager or leader at a sport or recreation program	☐	☐	☐	☐
c. At a community-service organization (examples: charity, special needs, environmental agency)	☐	☐	☐	☐
d. At a faith-based organization	☐	☐	☐	☐
e. For a political candidate or party or some political cause	☐	☐	☐	☐

3. Were any of the above (question 2) volunteer activities required by...
(Please ☒ all that apply)

- ☐ School
☐ Youth Council
☐ Club or Society (examples: National Honors Society, Boy Scouts, Girl Scouts, Key Club)
☐ Other Organization (please specify) _____

During this school year (2004-2005) did you work at a paid job? ☐ Yes ☐ No
(Please ☒ one).

4. IF YES, please indicate the number of hours you worked in a typical week during the past month. _____ Hrs/ week

SECTION 2: Parent/Guardian Involvement

The following questions ask for information about you and your parent(s)/guardian(s). Please answer each question to the best of your ability.

5. Some youth live in more than one home in order to spend time with their parents/guardians.

- a. Did you live in more than one home during this school year (2004-2005) or past summer (2004)?

- ☐ Yes – please answer the questions in boxes A and B
☐ No – please answer the questions in box A

BOX A

Home 1 – home closest to your school

Which of the following adults live in this household? Please *check* all that apply

- ☐ Mother (biological or adopted)
☐ Father (biological or adopted)
☐ Step-Mother or Step-Father
☐ Grandparent(s)
☐ Other Guardian(s)

Please specify: _____



What is the zip code of this home (5 digits)?
____ _

BOX B

Home 2 – other home

Which of the following adults live in this household? Please *check* all that apply

- ☐ Mother (biological or adopted)
☐ Father (biological or adopted)
☐ Step-Mother or Step-Father
☐ Grandparent(s)
☐ Other Guardian(s)

Please specify: _____



What is the zip code of this home (5 digits)?
____ _

6. Please indicate your parent(s)/guardian(s)' level of involvement or participation in each of the following activities during this school year (2004-2005) or past summer (2004).						
My parent(s) or guardian(s) have volunteered...		Never	Once a Month or Less	A Couple Times a Month	At Least Once a Week	Don't Know
a.	At a school (examples: helper, tutor, mentor, PTA, school board, fundraising)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
b.	As a coach, manager or leader at a sport or recreation program	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
c.	At a community-service organization (examples: charity, special needs, environmental agency)	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
d.	At a faith-based organization	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐
e.	For a political candidate or party or some political cause	☐	☐	☐	☐	☐

7. The following statements ask about your relationship(s) with your parent(s)/guardian(s). Please circle the number that represents your level of agreement for each statement.		My parent(s) or guardian(s)...					
		Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree		
		1	2	3	4	5	
a.	Talk about things that are important to me	1	2	3	4	5	
b.	Are willing to help me with my problems	1	2	3	4	5	
c.	Attend events or activities that are important to me	1	2	3	4	5	
d.	Talk with me about plans for my future (career(s) and/or college)	1	2	3	4	5	
e.	Encourage me to get involved in activities to help make my community a better place to live	1	2	3	4	5	
f.	Trust me to do the right thing	1	2	3	4	5	
g.	Encourage me to give ideas and opinions even if we might disagree	1	2	3	4	5	
h.	Talk with me about how things are going in my life	1	2	3	4	5	
i.	Know all of the youth that I spend my time with	1	2	3	4	5	
j.	Talk about local or community issues with me (examples: political elections, referendums, bonds)	1	2	3	4	5	
k.	Talk about state or federal issues with me (examples: political elections, state representatives, propositions)	1	2	3	4	5	

8. Please indicate your parent(s)/guardian(s)' level of involvement or participation in each of the following activities during this school year (2004-2005) or past summer (2004). Please ☒ one for each statement.				
My parent(s) or guardian(s)...		Yes	No	Don't Know
a.	Voted on local or community issues (examples: political candidate elections, referendums, bonds)	☐	☐	☐
b.	Voted on state or federal issues (examples: presidential elections, state representatives, propositions)	☐	☐	☐

SECTION 3: Your Youth Council Involvement and Perceptions

9. The following questions ask about you and your involvement with your youth council. Please answer each question to the best of your ability.
- a. Which of the following school years have you been involved in your youth council?
(Please ☒ ALL that apply)
☐ This year (2004-2005) ☐ 2002-2003 ☐ 2000-2001
☐ Last year (2003-2004) ☐ 2001-2002
- b. What role(s) have you had in your youth council during the 2004-2005 school year?
(Please ☒ ALL that apply)
☐ Chair/youth mayor/president ☐ Co- or vice- chair/youth mayor ☐ Voting member/participant
☐ Non-voting member/participant ☐ Secretary ☐ Treasurer
☐ Record keeper ☐ Subcommittee member ☐ Other (please specify) _____
- c. How many youth usually attended a typical youth council meeting during this school year (2004-2005)? _____ youth
- d. How many youth were officers or leaders in your youth council during this school year (2004-2005) (examples: president, secretary, treasurer)? _____ officers or leaders

10. Please indicate if each of the following reasons describes why you may have first participated in the youth council by marking <i>I joined the youth council to...</i> in the first column. Next, please indicate if your participation in the youth council has helped you to do this by marking your level of agreement in the second column.		As a result of participating in the youth council, I have been able to...										
		I joined the youth council to...	Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree				
			1	2	3	4	5					
a.	Make new friends with youth my age	☐	1	2	3	4	5					
b.	Gain skills to help me in the future (examples: career(s) and/or college)	☐	1	2	3	4	5					
c.	Spend more time with my friends	☐	1	2	3	4	5					
d.	Gain experience in a leadership role	☐	1	2	3	4	5					
e.	Be involved in something exciting	☐	1	2	3	4	5					
f.	Help make my community a better place to live	☐	1	2	3	4	5					
g.	Be involved with adults who care about me	☐	1	2	3	4	5					
h.	Provide more out-of-school activities for youth in my community	☐	1	2	3	4	5					
i.	Youth council members invited or encouraged me to get involved	☐	1	2	3	4	5					
j.	Adults affiliated with the youth council invited or encouraged me to get involved	☐										

11. Please indicate whether your involvement in the youth council has helped you to become more confident in doing each of the following tasks by circling the appropriate number in the first column. Next, please indicate whether you did this task during this school year (2004-2005) .		As a result of participating in my youth council, I could...					During this school year (2004-2005), I did the following (Please ☒ all that apply)	
		Strongly Disagree					Strongly Agree	
a.	Write a letter to a community leader or group about an issue that is important to youth in my community (examples: city council or local school board, city or school newspaper)	1	2	3	4	5		☐
b.	Search for information about an issue that is important to youth in my community	1	2	3	4	5		☐
c.	Give a presentation or speak to a community leader or group about an issue that is important to youth in my community	1	2	3	4	5		☐
d.	Participate in fund raising initiatives	1	2	3	4	5		☐
e.	Help organize or run a meeting	1	2	3	4	5		☐
f.	Discuss community issues that are important to youth in my community	1	2	3	4	5		☐
g.	Read at least a part of my local government's budget	1	2	3	4	5		☐
h.	Apply for a grant or donation in writing	1	2	3	4	5		☐
i.	Attend city council meetings	1	2	3	4	5		☐
j.	Attend other public meetings (not city council)	1	2	3	4	5		☐
k.	Follow what is going on in my community (examples: watching the news on TV, reading the newspaper)	1	2	3	4	5		☐
l.	Increase awareness of health issues facing youth in my community (examples: obesity, smoking, teen pregnancy, drugs, alcohol)	1	2	3	4	5		☐

12. For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement by circling the appropriate number or ☒ Don't Know.							
The diversity of youth in my youth council matches the diversity of youth in my community in regards to...							
	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Agree
a. Ethnicity/race	1	2	3	4	5		☐ Don't Know
b. Income-level	1	2	3	4	5		☐
c. Physical/mental abilities	1	2	3	4	5		☐
d. Personal/social interests (examples: sports, arts, academics, religious faiths)	1	2	3	4	5		☐
In my youth council...							
e. Members make an effort to encourage youth from all diverse backgrounds to participate	1	2	3	4	5		☐
f. Adult mentor(s) make an effort to encourage youth from all diverse backgrounds to participate	1	2	3	4	5		☐

13. For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement by circling the appropriate number.		Strongly Disagree				Strongly Agree
During this school year (2004-2005)...		1	2	3	4	5
a.	My opinions were valued by other youth council members	1	2	3	4	5
b.	I enjoyed participating in youth council meetings and activities	1	2	3	4	5
c.	I respected the opinions of other youth council members even if they were different than mine	1	2	3	4	5
d.	My opinions were valued by adult mentors	1	2	3	4	5
e.	I attended almost every youth council meeting and activity	1	2	3	4	5
f.	I am proud of the work I have done with my youth council	1	2	3	4	5
g.	Youth council meetings and activities were well organized	1	2	3	4	5
h.	Overall, I am satisfied with my youth council experience	1	2	3	4	5

14. For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement by circling the appropriate number.

I am NOT able to participate in the youth council as much as I want to because...		Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		
		1	2	3	4	5
a.	I have other commitments	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Most of my friends are involved in other activities	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Of transportation/finding a way to get there	1	2	3	4	5
d.	My parent(s)/guardian(s) don't allow me to participate as much as I want to	1	2	3	4	5

15. The following statements ask about activities you might do after you graduate (or leave) high school. Please indicate your level of agreement by circling the appropriate number.

In the future I will ...		Not At All Likely		Extremely Likely		
		1	2	3	4	5
a.	Vote on local or community issues (examples: political candidate elections, referendums, bonds)	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Vote on state or federal issues (examples: presidential elections, state representatives)	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Volunteer at a community-service organization (examples: charity, special needs, environmental agency)	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Volunteer for a political candidate or party or some political cause	1	2	3	4	5

16. Would you be interested in becoming involved in a regional or state-wide youth group that provided leadership to address health-related youth issues (examples: obesity, smoking, teen pregnancy and drugs and alcohol abuse)? (Please circle only one)
- ☐ Yes ☐ No

SECTION 4: Adult Mentors

This section asks for information about your adult mentors and your interaction and communication with them.
Please answer each question to the best of your ability.

17. How many adult mentors did your youth council have during this school year (2004-2005)? ____ mentors
- a. During this school year (2004-2005), how many adult mentors usually attended your youth council meetings? ____ mentors

18.	The following statements ask about your relationship(s) with the adult mentor(s) in your youth council. Please circle the number that represents your level of agreement for each statement.					
The mentor(s) in my youth council...		Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		
a.	Talk about things that are important to me	1	2	3	4	5
b.	Are willing to help me with my problems	1	2	3	4	5
c.	Talk with me about plans for my future (career(s) and/or college)	1	2	3	4	5
d.	Encourage me to get involved in activities to help make my community a better place to live	1	2	3	4	5
e.	Trust me to do the right thing	1	2	3	4	5
f.	Encourage me to share ideas and opinions even if we might disagree	1	2	3	4	5
g.	Talk with me about how things are going in my life	1	2	3	4	5
h.	Know all of the youth that I spend my time with	1	2	3	4	5

19. Please indicate your level of agreement for each of the following statements by circling the appropriate number.									
Adult mentor(s) involved with my youth council...				Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree			
a.	Provide feedback on how to improve the youth council	1	2	3	4	5			
b.	Provide guidance, but let youth make decisions	1	2	3	4	5			
c.	Provide training to help youth council members develop the skills that they need to be effective	1	2	3	4	5			
d.	Respect ideas and beliefs of all youth council participants	1	2	3	4	5			
e.	Keep youth council members informed about community issues	1	2	3	4	5			
f.	Make sure that youth council members understand their responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5			
g.	Help get funding to support youth council efforts	1	2	3	4	5			
h.	Publicly promote youth council efforts (examples: brochure, community newspaper, website, public speaking)	1	2	3	4	5			
i.	Share responsibility for decision-making with youth	1	2	3	4	5			
j.	Recognize when youth council members do a good job	1	2	3	4	5			
k.	Ask for input from youth council members before making decisions that might affect the youth council	1	2	3	4	5			
l.	Miss a lot of meetings	1	2	3	4	5			
m.	Treat all youth council members fairly	1	2	3	4	5			
n.	Make sure that all youth council members are involved in youth council meetings and activities	1	2	3	4	5			
o.	Try to get other community organizations involved in youth council efforts	1	2	3	4	5			

SECTION 5: Youth Council Affiliations and Community Impacts

20. To what organizations and/or departments in your community does your youth/teen council report?
(Please ☒ all that apply)

- ☐ Parks and Recreation
☐ City Council/Town or Village Board
☐ Community Foundation
☐ Mayor's Office
☐ Other (please specify) _____

21. Please indicate how important each of the following statements are by circling the appropriate number in column A. Next, indicate your level of agreement by circling the appropriate number in column B for each of the following statements.

	A. Importance It is important that my youth council can...					B. Performance My youth council has been able to...				
	Not At All Important	Important	Very Important	Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree					
a. Improve the view that adults have of youth in my community	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
b. Ensure that local government meets the needs of youth in my community	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
c. Increase number of youth who volunteer in my community	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
d. Increase the participation of youth in positive out-of-school activities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
e. Create a more positive image for local government	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
f. Provide a youth voice on issues facing youth and other community residents	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
g. Make my community a better place to live for youth and their families	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5

Question 21 (cont'd)														
	A. Importance						B. Performance							
	It is important that my youth council can...						My youth council has been able to....							
	Not At All Important	Very Important				Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree							
h.	Provide more effective services for youth and their families	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5			
i.	Provide youth with opportunities to identify and learn about community	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5			
j.	Give youth positive hope about the future	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5			
k.	Help youth gain skills to help them in the future	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5			
l.	Give youth the opportunity to gain experience in a leadership role	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5			
m.	Give youth the opportunity to be involved in community service that will help them get a job or get into college	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5			
n.	Give youth the opportunity to be involved with adults who care about them	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5			
o.	Help youth learn more about the role of local government	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5			
p.	Increase awareness about health issues for youth in my community (examples: obesity, smoking, teen pregnancy)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5			

SECTION 6: Demographic Information

The following section asks for your demographic information. This information will be used only for this study and will not be shared with anyone.

Please mark your response for the following questions with a ☒ or write in your answer.

22. Are you? (Please ☒ one) ☐ Male ☐ Female
23. What is your racial, ethnic, or cultural background? (Please ☒ ALL that apply)
- | | |
|--|--|
| ☐ White | ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native |
| ☐ Black or African-American | ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander |
| ☐ Asian, including Asian Indian | ☐ Arabic/Chaldean |
| ☐ Latino(a)/Hispanic/Spanish | ☐ Other (please specify) _____ |
24. What is your age? _____ years old
25. What grade are you in? (Please ☒ one)
- | | | | |
|--|--|---|---|
| ☐ 5 th | ☐ 7 th | ☐ 9 th | ☐ 11 th |
| ☐ 6 th | ☐ 8 th | ☐ 10 th | ☐ 12 th |
26. What kind of grades do you typically earn in school? (Please ☒ one)
- | | | | | |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| ☐ All A's | ☐ A's & B's | ☐ A's, B's & C's | ☐ C's & D's | ☐ D's & F's |
|----------------------------------|------------------------------------|---|------------------------------------|------------------------------------|
27. What are your plans after you graduate from High School? (Please ☒ one)
- | | |
|---|--|
| ☐ I do not expect to graduate | ☐ Work at a full time job (not only summer) |
| ☐ Attend college/community college | ☐ Other (please specify) _____ |

The following questions ask about your home. If you lived in more than one home during this school year (2004-2005) or this past summer (2004), please refer to the home that is closest to your school.

28. How many years have you lived in:
- | | | | |
|----|-------------------------------------|-------|-------|
| a. | Your present home or residence..... | _____ | years |
| b. | Your present community..... | _____ | years |
| c. | Michigan.... | _____ | years |
29. Including yourself, how many people are currently living in your household?
- | | | | |
|----|----------------------------------|-------|-----------------------------|
| a. | Children/teens 0-17 years old... | _____ | (number) of children /teens |
| b. | Adults (18 years/older)... | _____ | (number) of adults |

Is there anything else you would like to share that might help your youth council or other youth councils in Michigan?

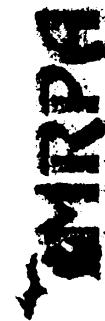
Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire!

Please place this completed survey in the envelope provided and return it to your adult mentor.

The results of this study will be posted on the study's website:
www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/

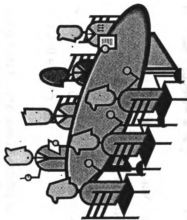
The results will also be sent to each community that participated.

Thank you again!



Michigan Youth Council Questionnaire

ADULT VERSION



Dear Youth Council Adult Mentor,

The information from this survey will be used to help the Michigan Recreation and Park Association (MRPA) and the Michigan Municipal League (MML) gain insight about Michigan youth councils.

Your participation is entirely voluntary. Your responses will be kept confidential and at no time will your name be identified with any results. The return of this survey will be considered as your consent to participate in the study.

We also need your help to encourage youth members, parents, and adult mentors who have been involved with your youth council in the past school year (2004-2005) and past summer (2004) to participate in this study.

Please note that you can also complete this survey online at www.carrs.msu.edu/mjyc/adult

If you have questions about the survey, please contact Dr. Dwayne Baker at Michigan State University, (517) 432-0278; Community, Agriculture, Recreation and Resource Studies; Michigan State University, 131 Natural Resources Bldg., East Lansing, MI 48824



Section 1: General Youth Council Information

1. The following questions ask for some general information about the makeup of your youth council.

a. How often did your youth council typically meet during this school year (2004-2005)?
(Please ☒ one)

- ☐ Less than once a month ☐ Once a month ☐ Twice a month
☐ Three or more times per month ☐ Other (please specify) _____

b. How many youth attended a typical youth council meeting during this school year (2004-2005)? _____ youth

c. What role(s) were filled in your youth council during this school year (2004-2005)? (Please ☒ all that apply)

- ☐ Chair/youth mayor/president ☐ Co- or vice-chair/youth mayor ☐ Voting member/participant
☐ Non-voting member/participant ☐ Secretary ☐ Treasurer
☐ Record keeper ☐ Subcommittee member ☐ Other (please specify) _____

d. How many youth were officers or leaders in your youth council during this school year (2004-2005) (examples: president, secretary, treasurer)? _____ officers or leaders

2. I would consider our youth council to be primarily ... (Please ☒ all that apply)

- ☐ An advisory group (to advise decision makers on youth needs)
☐ A leadership training program (to train youth in leadership skill development)
☐ An advocacy group (to advocate for and with other youth)
☐ A task group (that exists for a short time to provide input for a specific reason)
☐ A youth programming group (to plan and implement youth programs)
☐ Other (please specify) _____

Section 2: Youth Council Perceptions and Activities

3. Please answer the following questions to the best of your ability.
- a. How long have you worked or volunteered with youth? _____ years
 - b. How long have you worked with this youth council? _____ years
 - c. About how many hours did you spend on youth council-related work in a typical month during this school year (2004-2005)? _____ hours/month

4. Please indicate if each of the following reasons describes why you think youth may have first participated in the youth council by marking <i>Youth join the youth council</i> to in the first column. Next, please indicate if you think that participation in the youth council has helped youth to do this by marking your level of agreement in the second column.	Youth join the youth council to...	As a result of participating in our youth council, youth have been able to...				
		Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Agree	Strongly Agree	Strongly Agree
a. Make new friends with youth their age	☐	1	2	3	4	5
b. Gain skills to help them in the future (career(s) and/or college)	☐	1	2	3	4	5
c. Spend more time with their friends	☐	1	2	3	4	5
d. Gain experience in a leadership role	☐	1	2	3	4	5
e. Be involved in something exciting	☐	1	2	3	4	5
f. Help make their community a better place to live	☐	1	2	3	4	5
g. Be involved with adults who care about them	☐	1	2	3	4	5
h. Provide more out-of-school activities for youth in their community	☐	1	2	3	4	5
i. Youth council members invited or encouraged youth to get involved	☐	1	2	3	4	5
j. Adults affiliated with the youth council invited or encouraged youth to get involved	☐	1	2	3	4	5

		As a result of their involvement, youth council members could...					Our youth council did the following (Please ☒ ALL that apply)
		Strongly Disagree			Strongly Agree		
5.	Please indicate whether you believe that their involvement in the youth council has helped youth to become more confident in doing each of the following tasks by circling the appropriate number in the first column. Next, please indicate whether youth in your youth council did each task during this school year (2004-2005).	1	2	3	4	5	☐
a.	Write a letter to a community leader or group about an issue that is important to youth in our community (examples: city council or local school board, city or school newspaper)	1	2	3	4	5	☐
b.	Search for information about an issue that is important to youth in our community	1	2	3	4	5	☐
c.	Give a presentation or speak to a community leader or group about an issue that is important to youth in our community	1	2	3	4	5	☐
d.	Participate in fund raising initiatives	1	2	3	4	5	☐
e.	Help organize or run a meeting	1	2	3	4	5	☐
f.	Discuss community issues that are important to youth in our community	1	2	3	4	5	☐
g.	Read at least a part of our local government's budget	1	2	3	4	5	☐
h.	Apply for a grant or donation in writing	1	2	3	4	5	☐
i.	Increase awareness about health issues facing youth in our community (examples: obesity, smoking, teen pregnancy, drugs, alcohol)	1	2	3	4	5	☐
j.	Attend city council meetings	1	2	3	4	5	☐

Question 5 (cont'd)		As a result of their involvement, youth council members could...					Our youth council did the following following (Please ☒ ALL that apply)
		Strongly Disagree	Strongly Agree				
k.	Attend other public meetings (not city council)	1	2	3	4	5	☐
l.	Follow what is going on in our community (examples: watching the news on TV, reading the newspaper)	1	2	3	4	5	☐
m.	Help organize or run a special event in our community	1	2	3	4	5	☐
n.	Help organize a training or educational session for youth	1	2	3	4	5	☐
o.	Serve on a regional or state-wide youth group that would provide leadership to address health-related issues	1	2	3	4	5	☐

6. For each of the following statements, please circle the number that best matches your level of agreement or ☒ Don't Know.		Strongly Disagree		Strongly Agree		Don't Know	
The diversity of youth in our youth council matches the diversity of youth in our community in regards to...							
a.	Ethnicity/race	1	2	3	4	5	☐
b.	Income-level	1	2	3	4	5	☐
c.	Physical/mental abilities	1	2	3	4	5	☐
d.	Personal/social interests (examples: sports, arts, academics, religious faiths)	1	2	3	4	5	☐
In our youth council...							
e.	Members make an effort to encourage all youth from diverse backgrounds to participate	1	2	3	4	5	☐
f.	Adult mentor(s) make an effort to encourage all youth from diverse backgrounds to participate	1	2	3	4	5	☐

7. For each of the following statements, please indicate your level of agreement by circling the appropriate number.		Strongly Disagree _____ Strongly Agree				
During this school year (2004-2005)...						
a.	I think that youth council members were satisfied with their youth council experiences	1	2	3	4	5
b.	I enjoyed participating in youth council meeting and activities	1	2	3	4	5
c.	I respected the opinions of youth council members even if they were different than mine	1	2	3	4	5
d.	My opinions were valued by other adult mentors	1	2	3	4	5
e.	I attended almost every youth council meeting and activity	1	2	3	4	5
f.	I am proud of the work I have done with the youth council	1	2	3	4	5
g.	Youth council meetings and activities were well organized	1	2	3	4	5
h.	Overall, I am satisfied with my youth council experience	1	2	3	4	5

Section 3: Adult Mentors

This section asks for information about adult mentors and youth's interaction and communication with them. Please answer each question to the best of your ability.

8. During this school year (2004-2005), how many adult mentors, including you...
- did your youth council have? _____ mentors
 - were paid as a part of their job? _____ mentors
 - entirely volunteered their time? _____ mentors

		A. How important is it for adult mentors to...					B. Adult mentors in my youth council...										
		Not Important	1	2	3	4	5	Very Important	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5			
9.	The following statements ask about the relationship among adult mentors and youth council members. For each of the following statements, please circle the number that best matches your level of agreement for both columns A and B .																
	a.	Talk about things that are important to youth council members	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	b.	Are willing to help youth council members with their problems	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	c.	Talk with youth council members about plans for their futures	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	d.	Encourage youth council members to get involved in activities to help make our community a better place to live	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	e.	Trust youth council members to do the right thing	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	f.	Encourage youth council members to give ideas and opinions even if they disagree with the adult mentors	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	g.	Talk with youth council members about how things are going in their lives	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	h.	Know all of the youth that youth council members spend their time with	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
	i.	Talk about local or community issues with youth council members (examples: elections, referendums, bonds)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5
j.	Talk about state or federal issues with youth council members (examples: elections, state representatives, propositions)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5	

10. Please ☒ each statement that describes your youth council. (Please ☒ ALL that apply)
- ☐ Mentors undergo a background/reference check prior to working with our youth council
 - ☐ Mentors are required to complete an orientation/training session prior to working with our youth council
 - ☐ Our youth council has a written terms of reference or constitution or set of by-laws that outlines what we do and how we operate
 - ☐ Mentors receive feedback on their performance from youth council members
 - ☐ Mentors volunteer to work with our youth council
 - ☐ Mentors are assigned by their employer to work with our youth council
 - ☐ Youth council is required to review and provide written recommendations on all issues related to children, youth and families
 - ☐ Youth council must produce an annual (or more often) report or presentation
 - ☐ City council asks for verbal input on issues relating to youth
 - ☐ Youth council members serve on local government commissions
 - ☐ Youth council members who serve on local government commissions, where possible, are able to vote
 - ☐ Youth council members regularly meet with the head of the local government (example: mayor)
 - ☐ Youth council members regularly meet with other city council members
 - ☐ The mayor is a youth council mentor
 - ☐ Other city council member(s) are seen as youth council member(s)
 - ☐ Our community has a commission focused on children, youth and/or families

11. For each of the following statements, please circle the number that best matches your level of agreement for both columns A and B.		A. As an adult mentor, I...					B. OTHER adult mentors in my youth council...						
		Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5	Strongly Disagree	1	2	3	4	5
a.	Provide feedback on how to improve the youth council	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
b.	Provide guidance, but let youth make decisions	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
c.	Provide training to help youth council members develop the skills that they need to be effective	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
d.	Respect ideas and beliefs of all youth council participants	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
e.	Keep youth council members informed about community issues	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
f.	Make sure that youth council members understand their responsibilities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
g.	Help get funding to support youth council efforts	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
h.	Publicly promote youth council efforts (examples: brochure, community newspaper, website, public speaking)	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
i.	Share responsibility for decision-making with youth	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
j.	Recognize when youth council members do a good job	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
k.	Ask for input from youth council members before making decisions that might affect the youth council	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
l.	Miss a lot of meetings	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
m.	Treat all youth council members fairly	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
n.	Make sure that all youth council members are involved in youth council meetings and activities	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		
o.	Try to get other community organizations involved in youth council efforts	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5		

Section 4: Youth Council Affiliations and Outcomes

12. What year was your youth council formed? _____
13. To what organizations and/or departments in your local community does your youth council report?
(Please ☒ ALL that apply).
- ☐ Parks and Recreation ☐ Mayor's Office
- ☐ City Council/Town or Village Board ☐ Community Foundation
- ☐ Other (please specify) _____
14. Which of the following organizations or agencies have you worked or partnered with regarding the youth council's work during the past year? (Please ☒ ALL that apply).
- ☐ Schools ☐ Community Foundation(s)
- ☐ Police ☐ Private Corporation(s)
- ☐ Non-profit ☐ Local/County Government(s)
- ☐ Faith-based ☐ State Government
15. Which of the following health-related topics have you addressed in your youth council during this school year (2004-2005)? (Please ☒ ALL that apply).
- | | |
|---|--|
| <u>Prevention</u> | <u>Healthy Lifestyles and Choices</u> |
| ☐ Tobacco/Smoking | ☐ Nutrition (examples: healthy eating/drinking) |
| ☐ Teen Pregnancy/STD's | ☐ Accessibility for Persons with Disabilities |
| ☐ Violence/Crime | ☐ Mental Health (examples: depression, suicide) |
| ☐ Drugs/Alcohol | ☐ Physical Activity |

16. There are currently discussions taking place at the state level with regard to the Michigan Department of Community Health's (MDCH) interest in creating a state-wide youth council. This group of youth will help to address health issues facing Michigan youth such as obesity, smoking, teen pregnancy and drugs and alcohol abuse.

a. Would you be interested in being a part of this process? ☐ Yes ☐ No

b. IF YES, may we share your contact information with the planning committee?
(Please note that no other personal information from this survey will be shared with the Michigan Department of Community Health (MDCH).)

☐ Yes ☐ No

c. Do you have any recommendations for the planning committee as they begin to develop a state-wide youth council? (Please use the space provided below.)

17. For each of the following statements, please circle the number that best matches your level of agreement in both column A and B.													
	A.							B.					
	It is important for our youth council to...							Our youth council's performance rating to ...					
	Not At All Important		—		Very Important			Poor		—		Excellent	
a.	Improve the view that adults have of youth in their community	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5	
b.	Ensure that local government meets the needs of youth in our community	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5	
c.	Increase number of youth who volunteer in our community	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5	
d.	Increase the participation of youth in positive out-of-school activities	1	2	3	4	5		1	2	3	4	5	

Question 17 (cont'd)															
	A.					B.									
	It is important for our youth council to...					Our youth council's performance rating to ...									
	Not At All Important	—	Very Important			Poor	—	Excellent							
e.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5					
f.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5					
g.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5					
h.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5					
i.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5					
j.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5					
k.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5					
l.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5					
m.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5					
n.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5					
o.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5					
p.	1	2	3	4	5	1	2	3	4	5					

18. Excluding staff costs (if applicable), does your youth council have an operating budget to work with?

(Please ☒ one)
☐ yes ☐ no

- a. IF YES, which of the following categories best represents your youth council's operating budget?

(Please ☒ one)

☐ Less than \$500 ☐ \$1,000 - \$1,999 ☐ \$5,000 or more
☐ \$500 - \$999 ☐ \$2,000 - \$4,999

19. For each of the following examples, please indicate whether or not you have worked or volunteered during the past year by placing a ☒ in the appropriate box.		Never	Once a Month	A Couple Times a Month	At Least Once a Week
I have volunteered...					
a.	At a school (examples: helper, tutor, mentor, PTA, school board, fundraising)	☐	☐	☐	☐
b.	As a coach, manager or leader at a sport or recreation program	☐	☐	☐	☐
c.	At a community-service organization (examples: charity, special needs, environmental agency)	☐	☐	☐	☐
d.	At a faith-based organization	☐	☐	☐	☐
e.	For a political candidate or party or some political cause	☐	☐	☐	☐

20. Which of the following MRPA-MML Youth Symposiums did your youth council attend? (Please ☒ ALL that apply).

- ☐ None ☐ 2002 (Traverse City) ☐ 2003 (Dearborn)
☐ 2004 (Zeeland) ☐ 2005 (Traverse City)

21. Which of the following MML conventions/workshops did youth from your youth council attend? (Please ☒ ALL that apply).

- ☐ None ☐ 2002 ☐ 2003 ☐ 2004 ☐ 2005

22. Which of the following NLC Congress of Cities Conference and Expositions did your youth council attend? (Please ☒ ALL that apply).

- ☐ None ☐ 2001 (Atlanta, GA) ☐ 2002 (Salt Lake City, UT)
☐ 2003 (Nashville, TN) ☐ 2004 (Indianapolis, IN)

23. Which of the following types of formal training sessions did your youth council attend during the past school year (2004-2005)? (Please ☒ ALL that apply).

- ☐ Grant writing/fund raising ☐ Youth issues (health, crime, diversity)
☐ Leadership training ☐ Other (please specify) _____

Please mark your response for the following questions with a ☒ or write in your answer. Please note that this information will be used only for this study and will not be shared with anyone.

24. Are you? (Please ☒ one) ☐ Male ☐ Female

25. What is your racial, ethnic, or cultural background? (Please ☒ ALL that apply)

- ☐ White ☐ American Indian or Alaska Native
☐ Black or African-American ☐ Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander
☐ Asian, including Asian Indian ☐ Arabic/Chaldean
☐ Latino(a)/Hispanic/Spanish ☐ Other (please specify) _____

26. What year were you born? 19 ____
27. How many years have you lived in:
 a. Your present home or residence..... ____ years
 b. Your present community..... ____ years
 c. Michigan.... ____ years
28. What is the zip code of your present home or residence? ____
29. Are you? *(Please ☒ only one)*
☐ Single, never married ☐ Married ☐ Divorced or Separated ☐ Widowed
30. Including yourself, how many people are **currently living in your present home or residence?**
 Children/teens 0-17 years old... ____ (number) of children /teens
 Adults (18 years/older)... ____ (number) of adults
31. Please indicate which of the diplomas/degrees below you have obtained, if any, and the name of your major(s). *(Please ☒ all that apply)*
- | | |
|--|-----------------|
| ☐ High School Diploma/GED | |
| ☐ Technical Degree | Major(s): _____ |
| ☐ Undergraduate Degree | Major(s): _____ |
| ☐ Graduate Degree (Masters or equivalent) | Major(s): _____ |
| ☐ Graduate Degree (Ph.D. or equivalent) | Major(s): _____ |
32. Would you like to be sent an individual study report in fall 2005 (about your group only)? You would receive this report in addition to the final study report (about all study participants). *(In an effort to maintain confidentiality, at least 4 youth from your youth council must complete and submit a questionnaire in order to receive an individual report.)*
☐ Yes ☐ No
33. In order to enter you into the prize drawings and/or to send your individual community report, please enter your email address below. *(Your information will be used for this purpose only and will not be shared with anyone.)*
 Email Address: _____

Is there anything else you would like to share that might help your council or other youth councils in Michigan?

Thank you for your time in completing this questionnaire!

Please place this completed survey in the small envelope provided and mail it along with the other surveys completed by your youth council in the large self-addressed and stamped envelope.

The results of this study will be posted on the study's website:
www.carrs.msu.edu/miyc/

The results will also be sent to each community that participated.

Thank you again!



APPENDIX H

DEFINING RURAL AND METROPOLITAN AREAS

Defining Rural and Metropolitan Areas

The 'metropolitan' and 'rural' areas described in this report were categorized according to the standards published in a 2000 *Federal Register* Notice (65 FR 82228 – 82238) by the Office of Management and Budget (OMB). In this Notice, the OMB defines Metropolitan Statistical Areas as having

at least one urbanized area of 50,000 or more population, plus adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured by commuting ties.

Locales determined by the OMB to be Metropolitan Statistical Areas are referred to as simply 'metropolitan' in the present report. Less populated statistical areas are defined by the OMB as Micropolitan Statistical Areas, which have

at least one urban cluster of at least 10,000 but less than 50,000 population, plus adjacent territory that has a high degree of social and economic integration with the core as measured by commuting ties.

In the present report, 'rural' areas refer to these Micropolitan Statistical Areas and regions not included in either this category or the Metropolitan Statistical Areas category (or those areas with an urban cluster of less than 10,000 population).

One difficulty with the OMB's categorization of Metropolitan Statistical Areas and Micropolitan Statistical Areas is that they are defined in terms of whole counties. Therefore, a small community immersed in a larger Metropolitan Statistical Area (one or more counties) is grouped and compared with large urban communities. Likewise, a large urban community between 10,000 and 50,000 population that is immersed within a rural area (one or more counties) is classified and compared with small rural communities.

* Information on defining metropolitan and rural areas can be found on the Office of Management and Budget's website at <http://www.whitehouse.gov/omb/>

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