

Evaluating the Effectiveness of the Texas FFA

Building Excellence Conference

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Introduction

- Employers are seeking workers with soft skills including leadership skills.
- Students enrolled in secondary agriculture courses can become FFA members and participate in activities designed to develop their leadership skills.
- Texas FFA conducts a series of “Excellence” workshops to enhance members’ leadership skills. These “Excellence workshops are “Made for Excellence” for sophomores, “Building Excellence” for juniors and “Executing with Excellence” for seniors.
- The “Building Excellence” workshop has never been evaluated to determine its effectiveness.
- This workshop was conducted seven times in locations across the state.
- The objectives of the workshop were developed by the presenters and the workshop leaders. (All seven workshops had the same objectives and were presented the same way).

Theoretical Framework

Bandura’s (1977) Self-Efficacy Theory was used for this study. Bandura states that one’s self-efficacy is their belief to accomplish a task or behavior. Self-efficacy influences a person’s actions and outcomes of their actions. While self-efficacy has been used in previous research in agricultural education to indicate one’s self perceived ability to do a task.



Methods

- Used a one-group, pre-test post-test design
- 16 objectives taught
- The researchers created statements to gauge the students’ self-efficacy for each of the 16 objectives (one statement per objective)
- A questionnaire was developed which included a Likert-type scale for each statement (0 = Strongly Disagree, 1 = Disagree, 2 = Slightly Disagree, 3 = Slightly Agree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree).
- 158 workshop participants took the pre-assessment just prior to the workshop starting and took the post-test at the conclusion of the workshop.
- Data was analyzed using Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS) version 25. Paired-samples t-tests were used to determine the differences between the students’ self-efficacy before and after the workshop ($p < .05$).

Results

There was a significant difference in the pre-test and post-test self-efficacy means of all 16 objectives. The most significant difference was seen in “I can explain the steps in creating effective goals.”



Table 1.

A Comparison of Pre-Test and Post Test Students Self-Efficacy (N = 158)

Variable	Pre-Test		Post-Test		t	p
	M	SD	M	SD		
I can explain how peer pressure can affect personal actions	4.84	0.739	5.72	0.542	-14.880	.000
I know how to identify positive traits in people around me	4.98	0.848	5.65	0.554	-10.403	.000
I can explain why goals are important and necessary to success.	5.11	0.722	5.88	0.363	-12.041	.000
I can explain how to build positive relationships.	4.53	0.915	5.73	0.522	-15.645	.000
I can explain the steps to creating effective goals.	4.33	0.961	5.70	0.561	-17.777	.000
I can describe how to confront bullying effectively.	4.32	1.072	5.58	0.698	-15.325	.000
I can identify the benefits of setting goals.	4.89	0.856	5.87	0.334	-15.083	.000
I know how to describe my personality.	4.66	1.126	5.60	0.638	-10.449	.000
I can show someone how to identify personal barriers to attaining their goals.	4.11	1.106	5.56	0.653	-15.863	.000
I can show someone ways to overcome peer pressure.	4.27	1.018	5.61	0.636	-16.587	.000
I know what self-image is and can define it.	4.27	1.207	5.59	0.588	-13.323	.000
I can describe the steps to be taken to change the way I view my personal self-image	4.04	1.254	5.70	0.561	-17.161	.000
I can differentiate between dreams and goals.	4.65	1.083	5.82	0.383	-13.485	.000
I am able to describe how I perceive myself.	4.49	1.051	5.65	0.639	-13.558	.000
I know what a strong and healthy relationship looks like.	4.89	1.003	5.77	0.531	-12.611	.000
I can identify the characteristics of effective goals.	4.65	0.964	5.74	0.494	-14.555	.000

Note: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Slightly Disagree, 4 = Slightly Agree, 5 = Agree, 6 = Strongly Agree;

Conclusion and Recommendations

The results of this study show this workshop was effective in increasing students’ self-efficacy in all 16 objectives. Means from the pre-test to post-test were compared and each objective had a statistically significant difference. This implies that the curriculum for the workshop and the strategies used by the facilitators were effective in teaching the target objectives and resulted in higher student self-efficacy and therefore should be continued in the future. This study did have several threats to internal validity so it cannot be assumed that all gains in self-efficacy were due to participation in the workshop alone, but it does show these participants did increase their self-efficacy in all 16 objectives and thus shows the workshop was effective. This research should be continued to further test the effectiveness of these workshops. Research could also test to see if there are some correlations between gender or workshop size and change in self-efficacy.