

Developmental Assets in a Residential Setting

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Abstract

The Search Institute's developmental assets serve as protective factors in adolescents' well-being and success in life. In addition, they act as barriers to high risk behaviors such as alcohol and drug use, violence, and school dropout. Several researchers have conducted studies showing a positive correlation between both internal and external developmental assets and successful life outcomes. It is imperative that developmental assets are taught and maintained not only in the home but also in the school curriculum and in community activities.

Developmental Assets in a Residential Setting

Many youth suffer from preventable injury, illness, and even death due to high risk behaviors. Chew, Osseck, Raygor, Eldridge-Houser, and Cox (2010) identified a list of health goals for United States' Youth. This called for action to reduce substance use, violence, suicide attempts, sexually transmitted diseases, and high risk behaviors in order to improve their health status. The developmental assets framework is an evidenced based strategy from the Search Institute that takes a closer look at specific assets that serve as buffers to minimize these high risk behaviors (Chew, Osseck, Raygor, Eldridge-Houser, & Cox, 2010). The Search Institute is a research to practice initiative which strives to study and strengthen developmental relationships called assets which help young people succeed. These assets are believed to be necessary to counter negative health behaviors as the more developmental assets a youth possesses, the more likely they are of having attributes of thriving (Taylor, Lerner, Eye, Robek, Balsano, Dowling, & Anderson, 2004). However, many youth are not provided the opportunity to develop these assets due to lack of structure and support in their home environments, unsafe neighborhoods, and schools lacking the resources and curriculum to support assets that youth are not able to learn at home (Chew et al., 2010).

Review of Literature

The juvenile justice system strives to protect children and the community from harm by serving those who are abused, neglected, or are offenders and to support the referred offender with services of rehabilitation. Chew et al. (2010) conducted a study in response to the increasing number of youth committed to social services. In the state of Missouri, almost 70,000 youth were referred to the juvenile court system. Of those, over 5,000 were placed in residential and juvenile detention facilities (Chew et al., 2010). In addition to being out of the home and having legal problems, these youth often have substance abuse, maltreatment, and mental health concerns that need to be addressed.

The average young person has only 18 of the possible 40 assets and youth have fewer assets as they get older. Scales (1999) further explained that the dangers in adolescent's lives are much greater while their resources to draw upon to protect themselves and thrive are more scarce. Scales (1999) compared youth with a high level of assets to those with low to average assets. Of the youth who had 0-10 assets, 53% were likely to use alcohol and 61% were likely to be involved in violence. Those who possessed 0-20 assets had a 30% chance of using alcohol and 35% chance of violence. Youth with 21-30 assets had an 11% chance of alcohol use and 18% engaged in violence. This study clearly identifies a relationship where the more developmental assets an adolescent has, the less likely they are to engage in high risk behaviors.

Further, Scales (1999) showed the power of assets to promote good health and success in school. Scales identified a positive correlation showing that 7% of youth were successful in school and 25% maintained good health with 0-10 assets. Of the youth with 11-20 assets, 18% were successful in school and 46% maintained good health. Those who had 21-30 assets, 35%

were successful in school and 69% maintained good health. Finally, 53% were successful in school and 88% maintained good health if they had between 31-40 assets.

The Search Institute's Developmental Assets

The Search Institute is a private, non-profit organization in Minnesota that conducts research on children, families and youth (Scales, 2000). The institute has collected data from their Developmental Assets Profile (DAP), a survey, on over one million sixth through twelfth grade students, ages 11-18. The DAP has identified 40 developmental assets that help children and youth not only survive, but thrive and achieve their full human potential (Scales, 2000).

The Search Institute (2005) described developmental assets as “developmental vitamins” or positive experiences that are essential to healthy psychological and social development in children and adolescents. The strength and amount of assets that a child or adolescent possess is strongly correlated with certain outcomes. Low levels of assets are related to academic underachievement, school problems, substance abuse, sexual activity, anti-social behavior, and violence (Scales, Benson, Leffert, & Blyth, 2000). High levels of Developmental Assets are related to academic achievement, leadership, thriving, and well-being. There are 40 total developmental assets measured, 20 external and 20 internal. External assets are defined as “positive experiences, relationships, and encouragement and support young people receive from peers, parents, teachers, neighbors, and other adults in the community (Search Institute, 2005).” Internal assets are “characteristics and behaviors that reflect positive personal and psychological development in young people (Search Institute, 2005).”

External Assets

External assets can be divided into four categories. They include Support, Empowerment, Boundaries and Expectations, and Constructive Use of Time. Each category contains specific assets with a description. Support can come from parents, family, neighbors, and other adults. It can be in the form of adult-adolescent communication, advice and help from parents, helpful neighbors, parent involvement in schooling, and a caring school environment (Search Institute, 2005). Empowerment is when the child or adolescent feels safe at home, school, and in their neighborhood. They feel valued and have useful jobs and roles, including service in their community (Search Institute, 2005). Boundaries and Expectations consist of family boundaries, school boundaries, neighborhood boundaries, adult role models, positive peer influence, and high expectations. The family and school have clear rules with consequences. The child's whereabouts is monitored at all times. Caring neighbors also take responsibility for monitoring the young person's behavior. Parents and other adults model positive, responsible behavior. The young person has friends that also model responsible behavior. Parents, teachers, and other supportive adults encourage the young person to do well (Search Institute, 2005). The final category of external assets is Constructive Use of Time. This can include creative activities where the child spends time in lessons in music, theatre, or other arts. Youth programs are suggested for young people to participate in sports, clubs, or other organizations in the school or community. Religious community and time at home are also included in Constructive Use of Time. Time at home is described as the young person spending two or less nights a week hanging out with friends with nothing planned to do (Search Institute, 2005).

Internal Assets

Internal assets include Commitment to Learning, Positive Values, Social Competencies, and Positive Identity. Commitment to Learning is measured by achievement motivation which is how motivated the person is to do well in school. School engagement and completing homework are examples of a young person being actively engaged in learning. These students also report doing homework for an average of one hour per day. If a young person is committed to learning they also care about their school and read for fun. High scores on Commitment to Learning are related to academic achievement and are protective against failure, dropout, and discipline problems. Low scores in this category are associated with under achievement, antisocial behavior, and dropout (Search Institute, 2005).

The second category of internal assets is Positive Values. These values include personal virtues such as honesty, integrity, responsibility, restraint, as well as caring about others and working for social equality and justice. Integrity is when the person acts on their convictions and stands up for their beliefs. Honesty and responsibility are assets where the young person tells the truth and is able to take personal responsibility. Equality and social justice include placing a high value on promoting equality and reducing hunger and poverty. Finally, restraint is when the young person believes it is important to abstain from sex, alcohol, and drugs. Scores in the excellent range of positive values give evidence of assets that will act as powerful guides in current and future decision making. Scores in the low range suggest a lack of personal values which can increase risk for alcohol and tobacco use, school problems, and violence (Search Institute, 2005).

Social Competencies is the third category with assets including planning and decision making, interpersonal competence-empathy, sensitivity, and friendship skills, cultural competence-knowledge and comfort with people of different backgrounds, resistance skills-resisting peer pressure and dangerous situations, and peaceful conflict resolution. Scores in the excellent range indicate a rich set of social competencies which promote thriving, affirmation of diversity, and leadership (Search Institute, 2005).

The final category of internal assets is Positive Identity. The assets measured in this category include, personal power or when young person feels they have control over their life, self-esteem, sense of purpose, and a positive view of personal future. Scores in the excellent range reflect strengths in the adolescent's emerging identity. Scores in the low range can be associated with a risk of anxiety, depression, and even suicide or self-injurious behavior (Search Institute, 2005).

The Search Institute has been gathering evidence for developmental assets since 1996. They have collected data from 2 million youth in 318 communities and 33 states across the United States. The result of their study shows that 15-18% of youth possess 0-18 developmental assets, 41% possess 11-20 assets, and 8% possess 31-40 assets. With a majority of youth having less than half of the total possible assets, the results of this study show that there is significant need for programs and curriculum aimed at helping youth develop more assets (Chew et al., 2010).

Basic Principles of Asset Building

Scales and Taccogna (2001) identified six basic principles of asset building. First, everyone can contribute. Teachers, parents, school administration, and community members can

all be positive role models and influences on children and adolescents. Second, all young people need developmental assets regardless of being at-risk, gifted, or have special needs. Third, relationships are the key to building assets. Strong nurturing relationships are proven to support youth, engage them in learning, and help them to focus on positive behaviors and thoughtful decision making. Fourth, asset building is an ongoing process. It should start when the child is young and continue through adolescence. In addition, educators and community members can add to assets that parents already provide (Scales & Taccogna, 2001). Fifth, consistency is important. When an adolescent hears the same message about beliefs, values, and expectations from all supports in their life they are more likely to be motivated, secure, and sensible. Finally, in addition to consistency, redundancy is crucial. Asset building is an ongoing process and a commitment to provide repeated exposure to caring relationships and opportunities. This allows young people to develop their talents, interests, and values in order to reach their goals and become productive members of society (Scales & Taccogna, 2001).

High Risk Youth

Chew et al. (2010) conducted a study on 62 residents in a juvenile justice center to assess their internal, external, and social assets. They found that most respondents scored low on internal assets, lacking protective factors. Specifically, they were lacking of community and religious involvement. Respondents expressed a desire to be more involved with their community but lacked parental involvement and positive peer influences which are also external assets measured. Youth also scored low on resisting peer pressure for substance abuse and social skills. The research shows that youth who score low on the DAP are more likely to encounter legal, social, and mental health problems and more is needed to provide children and adolescents with opportunities to thrive. The researchers recommended helping youth develop their social

skills, provide a safe place where they can go in the community, service learning opportunities, and positive role models and trusted adults (Chew et al., 2010).

Taylor et al. (2004) conducted a study on the internal and external developmental assets of African American male gang members between the ages of 14 and 18. This population was compared to youth in a community based organization (CBO). In regards to assets such as boundaries and expectations, the study found that while youth in a (CBO) were likely to have friends who used drugs, gang members were much more likely. Compared to gang youth, CBO participants were more likely to describe their parents as having rules and structure at home. Gang members identified role models as rappers and CBO youth were more likely to identify a parent or teacher. Assets relating to support showed that CBO youth were more likely to rate their relationships with parents as excellent to fair. These youth also reported feeling supported by their parents no matter what they did in life, having parents that were proud of them, and parents that attended school functions and parent teacher conferences (Taylor et al., 2004). In terms of empowerment, more CBO youth than gang members reported that their family and friends had not experienced danger or violence. CBO youth scored high on social competency, reporting that they were more likely to settle disputes with friends by talking it out versus violence. Finally, in regard to commitment to learning, CBO youth reported doing their homework assignments more often and attending school in order to get a better job or go to college. Gang members reported attending school because of parental demands or to socialize with friends (Taylor et al., 2004).

Measures to Build Developmental Assets

Building assets in schools.

Children and adolescents spend most of their days in a school setting. In addition to developing assets at home, structured environments like schools can provide great opportunities to develop assets. For some, school may be the only environment where children are provided this opportunity. Scales & Taccogna (2001) reported that infusing school community into the developmental assets approach requires efforts in five main areas of schooling. First, curriculum and instruction need to have cross-curricular integration, team teaching and exploratory programs of interest to keep students engaged. Service learning opportunities not only help the community but allow the student to feel valuable and to make contributions to their community. Teachers coordinating and monitoring homework can help youth feel empowered in their learning and build relationships with adults outside of their parents (Scales & Taccogna, 2001). Teachers should also provide clear school boundaries informing students what they must know and do for a particular grade. This also helps to establish a feeling of safety and ownership of success. Cooperative learning develops skills needed for positive peer influence and interpersonal relationships. Overall, the curriculum should encourage communication, decision making, and planning. Reading ability is another key component of building developmental assets. The curriculum should provide educators with training in teaching and supporting reading skills for both meaning and pleasure. This could directly improve the reading for pleasure asset but also contribute to overall greater reading success as a needed skill in life (Scales & Taccogna, 2001).

School Organization is the second area that a school community can help to infuse developmental assets. Scales and Taccogna (2001) explained that several organizational structures within a school support more and deeper relationships between adults and students, increase motivation, and ensure consistency in boundaries and expectations. Organizing the school into smaller communities within the larger system, organizing advisor/advisee teams, and looping students by keeping them in the same smaller school community will help to support these deeper relationships with adults. Students will also feel more involved and accountable in their community and can seek support easier. Students should be able to have input and make decisions in school operations. Making decisions and helping develop rules leads to the building of empowerment assets. The parental involvement asset can be enhanced by asking parents to participate on committees or in the classroom. Positive peer influences and relationships with adults can be developed by having before and after school programs that have structured activities and appropriate support for youth (Scales & Taccogna, 2001).

The third area in a school setting to build developmental assets is co-curricular programs. Before and after school programs are also helpful in this area. Youth can become involved in creative arts, sports, clubs, and tutoring which will help to develop their social-emotional intelligence, provide service learning activities, and promote leadership. It is important that all youth are encouraged to join these programs and that they are as inclusive as possible (Scales & Taccogna, 2001).

Community partnerships are opportunities for youth to develop assets and expand on their educational experience through “real world” experiences. Students will learn content related skills and knowledge in addition to contributing to their community. Organizations such

as the YMCA, Boys and Girls Club, and other programs directed at youth are key providers as they typically share the same positive values and missions (Scales & Toccagna, 2001).

The fifth and final aspect that schools can offer in order to build developmental assets is support services. Support services can include peer mediation, counseling, health services, family resource centers. These services act as a wrap around for students and their families. In addition, students who lack support at home will be able to continue to gain developmental assets with the help of caring and encouraging adults at school (Scales & Toccagna, 2001).

Developing resiliency to build assets.

In 1998 Congress initiated the Comprehensive School Reform where students considered at risk of school failure receive intervention. \$145 million in grants were given to schools to improve educational outcomes of these students. This model assumes that there must be a deficit already present before it can be treated. Youth are required to have already failed or be unsuccessful before interventions are introduced to reduce the deficit. This makes this model more of a reactive versus proactive approach. Further, researchers claimed that this approach is not linked to specific intervention models, contain methodological errors that limit treatment efficacy, and to not promote effective overall functioning in children (Edwards, Mumford, Shillingford, Serra-Roldan, 2007). In response to the ineffectiveness of the Comprehensive School Reform, the Youth Risk Behaviors Surveillance System was developed where high risk behaviors are examined and resiliency is developed by building developmental assets. This new approach focuses on strengths rather than deficits. It also uses an ecological framework focusing on the context of the youth and their environment in including physical, economic, biological, psychological, and social settings. Because this approach examines factors such as stressful life

events, socioeconomic status, peer competence, community environments, and quality of caregiving, schools can be limited in addressing some of the broader ecological variables. What is interesting is that researchers are seeing that resiliency is the construct helping youth to adapt to the adversity they are facing.

Resiliency is the ability to cope with and manage negative life circumstances and events that make a youth more likely to engage in high risk behaviors. These children experience normal outcomes despite challenging circumstances (Edwards, Mumford, Shillingford, Serra-Roldan, 2007). Resiliency is derived from several sources. They are the personal characteristics or circumstance of the youth and their families, the social and academic organization of the school, the community contexts in which the youth, family, and school function, and the relationship of each of these factors with each other. Any of these sources can serve as protective factors that decrease the effect of risk in a young person's life. These sources are developmental assets that buffer youth from endangering themselves by participating in high risk behaviors. The number of assets that a youth has is strongly correlated with their ability to develop resilience (Edwards, Mumford, Shillingford, Serra-Roldan, 2007).

Scales, Sharma, Drake, & Blyth (1998) agreed that those who grow up in disadvantaged conditions can escape without serious damage. They found that resilient youth who thrived under adverse conditions had the support of at least one caring adult. Further, they found that these youth were at lower risk of a psychiatric disorder, had engaging personalities, were liked by others, were good learners and problem solving, and had self-efficacy (Leffert, Benson, Scales, Sharma, Drake, & Blyth, 1998).

Knowing this, the Youth Risk Behaviors Surveillance System developed asset mapping. It is used to determine whether schools and communities possess developmental assets to help all young people, not just those that are at high risk or have already failed. It is a more positive approach than the traditional deficits approach. This model is aimed at identifying assets in schools and communities in order to build a shared network of resources and costs. The Capacity Inventory of Individual is used to identify these specific assets in schools and members in the community where schools are able to access these resources based on what is available from the survey. This provides direct linkage between schools and communities and shares the responsibility of promoting developmental assets in youth.

Training Staff in Family Support Programs

In order to gain both internal and external assets research has shown the importance of supportive connections and competencies within the family. In addition, relationships outside of the family in schools and communities are needed to support families and their youth in building assets. It seems that families are in need of assistance in learning how to provide a nurturing environment to promote the building of these assets. Scales (1997) explained a study conducted by the Search Institute. Since 1989 the Institute has examined 400,000 youth in grades 6-12 in 600 communities. They have found that only 56% experience family support, 48% experience positive communication with parents, and 26% say their parents are actively involved in helping them succeed in school (Scales, 1997). These alarming statistics show that family support programs can be vital in facilitating family support and communication.

The purpose of Family Support Programs is to “strengthen and empower families and communities so that they can foster the optimal development of children, youth, and adult family

members (Scales, 1997, p. 614).” These programs are unique in that they offer life skills training which can include employment training for parents as well as problem solving and family literacy. They also offer parent information class and support groups, family activities, time for parents to drop-in and talk with staff members, information and referral services, family counseling, and auxiliary support services such as food and clothing. This resource seems highly effective in theory but Scales (1997) found that only a minority of staff in these programs have adequate training for working with families and adolescents.

Scales (1997) conducted a study on family support worker’s perceptions about their training and services offered to families. Workers were given a 10 item assessment on their knowledge of adolescent development. 45% of respondents gave inaccurate answers (Scales 1997). When assessing the perceived promotion of Developmental Assets, most respondents thought that they did an inadequate job of providing critical assets. 90% of the respondents felt that additional, specialized training in developmental assets and adolescent development would be useful.

The reported research on developmental assets does well to thoroughly describe each asset and how it can be developed by parents, teachers, community members, etc. The research goes into describing and helping a reader to develop curriculum to not only understand the asset but why it is important for an adolescent’s development. The research also addressed youth who are not labeled “at risk”. Many developmental frameworks target those who are already failing, involved in the legal system, or who have behavior issues. The developmental asset framework and curriculum designed for schools can be applied to all youth no matter what their present risk is. This is an all-encompassing model that theoretically could be implemented in every school and youth activity.

Limitations in the Research

There are several limitations to the existing literature on Developmental Assets. First, all studies found cited the Search Institute as being the primary source on developmental assets. It would be helpful to find another evaluation of developmental assets from an independent source to compare outcome measures as well as to see whether there is a discrepancy in categories of assets. Another limitation is that it is difficult to find longitudinal studies on developmental assets. It is assumed that this is because of difficulty to track participants and or dropout in the study. Because research is lacking on the long term effectiveness of developmental assets it is unclear how stable and lasting the assets are.

The research question being addressed is, “What Developmental Assets are Clients Lacking When Admitted to the Residential Rehabilitation?” In understanding what developmental assets are lacking upon admission, more programs and curriculum in the daily structure of the program can be introduced and help clients to build more assets while in treatment.

Method

The Search Institute defines developmental assets as “developmental vitamins” or positive experiences that are essential to healthy psychological and social development in children and adolescents (Search Institute, 2005). The strength and amount of assets that a child or adolescent possess is strongly correlated with certain outcomes. Low levels of assets are related to academic underachievement, school problems, substance abuse, sexual activity, anti-social behavior, and violence. High levels of Developmental Assets are related to academic

achievement, leadership, thriving, and well-being. A measure of the youth's developmental assets is taken again when they are discharged from the program.

This study was conducted in a residential treatment setting in the Northeastern United States for adolescents between the ages of 13-21 who are at risk or unable to remain safe in their home environment due to substance dependence. The facility consists of two master's level trained clinicians with experience in substance abuse as well as trained residential counselors who manage and facilitate structured activities and groups throughout the day. A program manager and director oversee residential staff as well as clinical staff. The rehab can house up to fourteen males at a time. The specific program being studied is part of a larger agency that consists of a chemical dependency outpatient clinic, a chemical dependency prevention program, as well as residential treatment centers for youth placed by family court.

During the intake they were given The Developmental Assets Profile (DAP) from the Search Institute to measure their baseline of developmental assets as well as upon discharge or at three months of stay, whichever occurs first.

One of the treatment goals for all youth at this residential facility is to increase developmental assets through various activities, learning opportunities, and community involvement. The purpose of this research is to get a baseline measure of developmental assets that youth are coming to treatment with. The research is beneficial because it will insight into which assets clients are lacking as well as if there is a trend of assets that client tend to have. Because this residential rehab uses specific programs and activities aimed at building assets, the data could help support programs already in place or provide justification for new program that would address different asset areas.

The original design of this study was to use a T-test to compare pre-treatment measures with post-treatment measures. The DAP also asks for demographics such as sex, age, and ethnicity which were also used to determine if certain assets are more likely in a specific age group, sex, or ethnic background. Of forty seven DAP's completed at admission, only six were completed after three months or at discharge. This was due to many unsuccessful discharges as well as stays that were less than three months.

The research design was modified to looking at trends in developmental assets that adolescents came to treatment with. Each asset was examined in order to determine which groups of assets were the highest upon treatment and which were the lowest.

Results

This study measured developmental assets in 47 males between the ages of 13 and 21. These adolescents were given the Developmental Asset Profile from the Search Institute upon admission to a residential chemical dependency program in the North Eastern United States. Individual scores for each asset area in external assets and internal assets were measured. In external assets the asset areas include, Support, Empowerment, Boundaries and Expectations, and Constructive Use of Time. Internal asset areas include, Commitment to Learning, Positive Values, Social Competencies, and Positive Identity. In addition to measuring internal and external assets, five context areas were measured. These include Personal, Social, Family, School, and Community.

In order to better understand what the scores mean, the Search Institute has developed markers to indicate the meaning of the score. For example, scores in each asset area between 0

and 14 are low, scores between 15 and 20 are fair, those between 21 and 25 are good, and scores between 26 and 30 are excellent.

External Assets

Table 1 indicates each participant’s score in the external asset area of Support. The average score for Support was 17.72 with a standard deviation of 6.39. This asset area received the highest overall mean which indicates that clients tend to come into treatment with their highest assets being in support. This average score indicates a fair score.

Table 1: *Support*

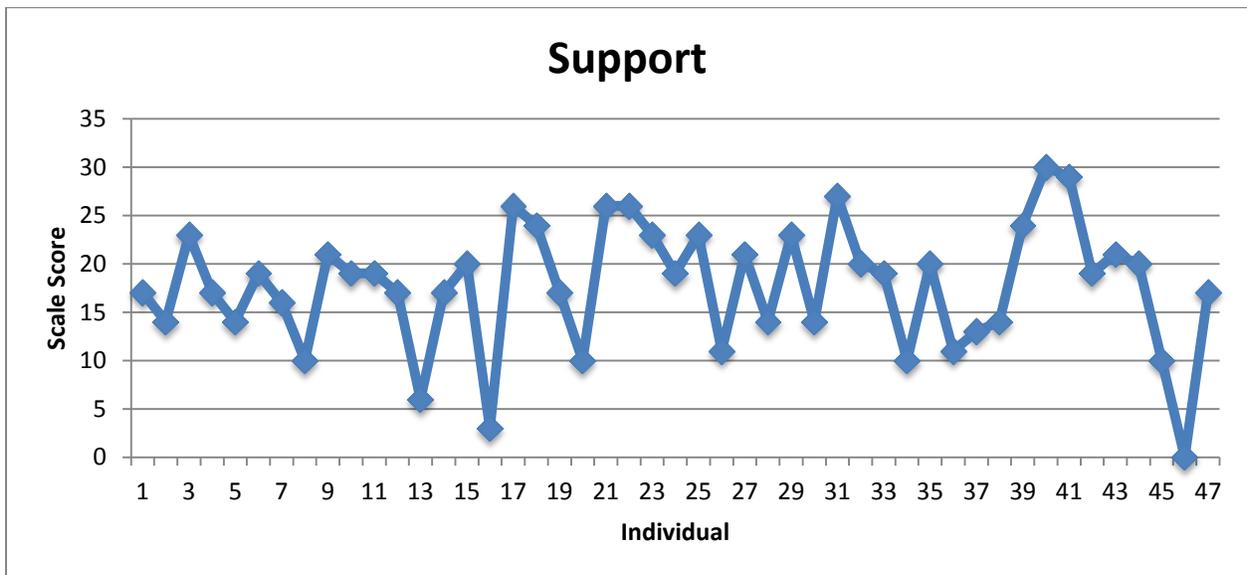
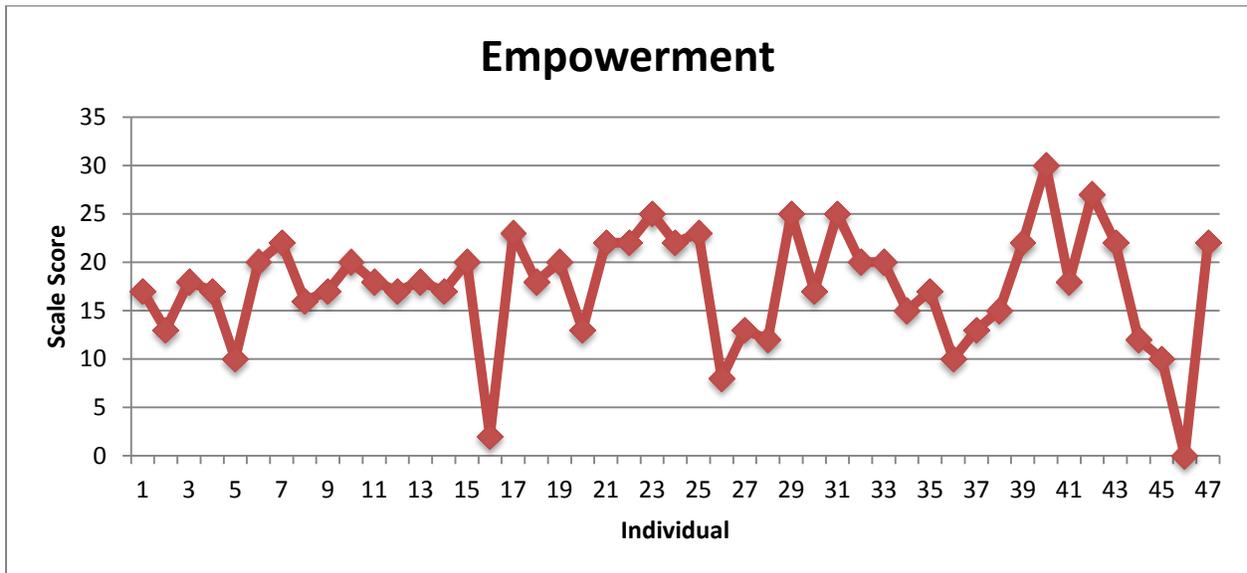


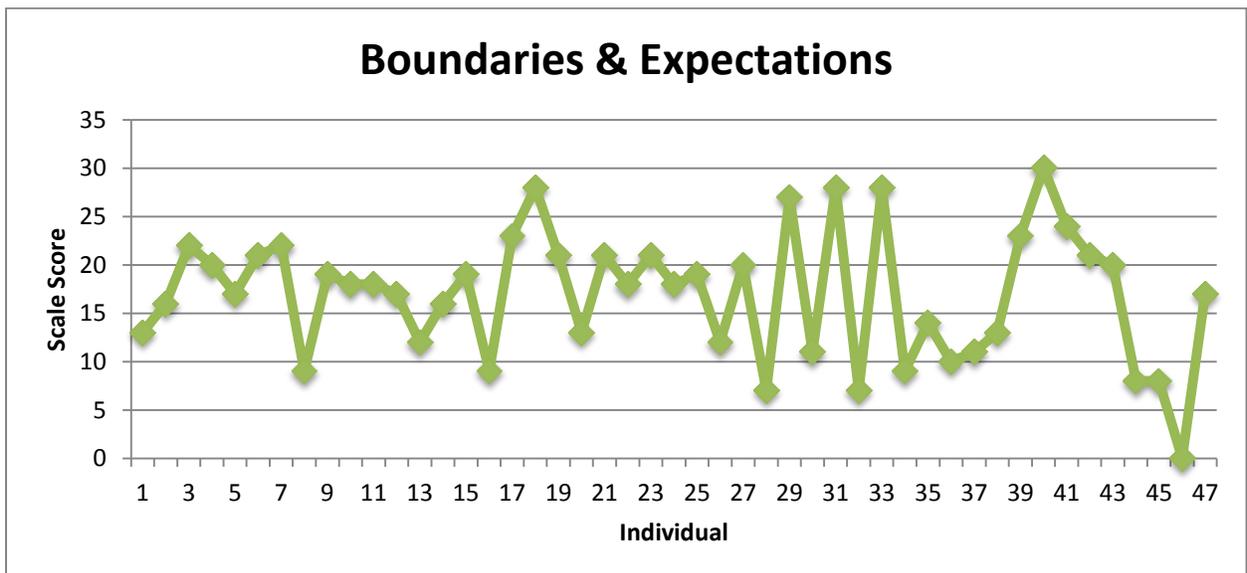
Table 2 provides the scores of each participant in the asset area of Empowerment. Empowerment was the second highest asset area of external assets with the mean score of 17.51 and a standard deviation of 5.87, making it a fair score.

Table 2: *Empowerment*



The external asset area of Boundaries and Expectations are shown on Table 3 with a mean of 16.98 and a standard deviation of 6.52. Boundaries and Expectations were ranked third out of the four external asset areas. This asset area received a fair average score according to the Search Institute.

Table 3: *Boundaries & Expectations*



The final external asset area measure is Constructive Use of Time on Table 4. Participants scored the lowest in this area overall when compared to all internal and external areas. The mean was 11.09 with a standard deviation of 6.63. This asset area would also be considered a low average score.

Table 4: *Constructive Use of Time*

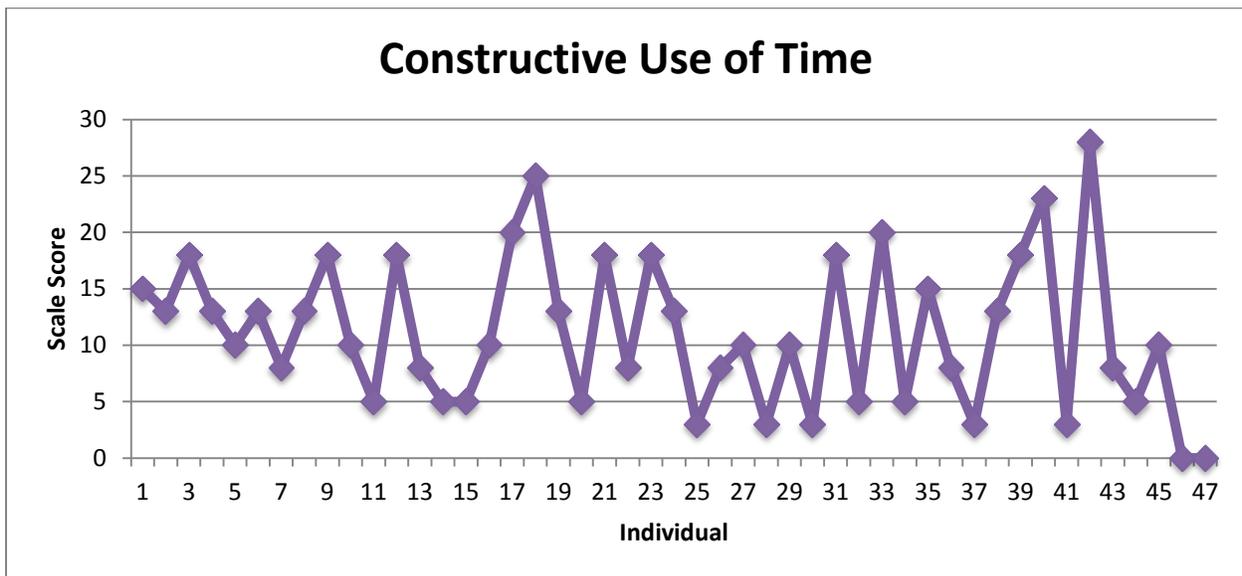
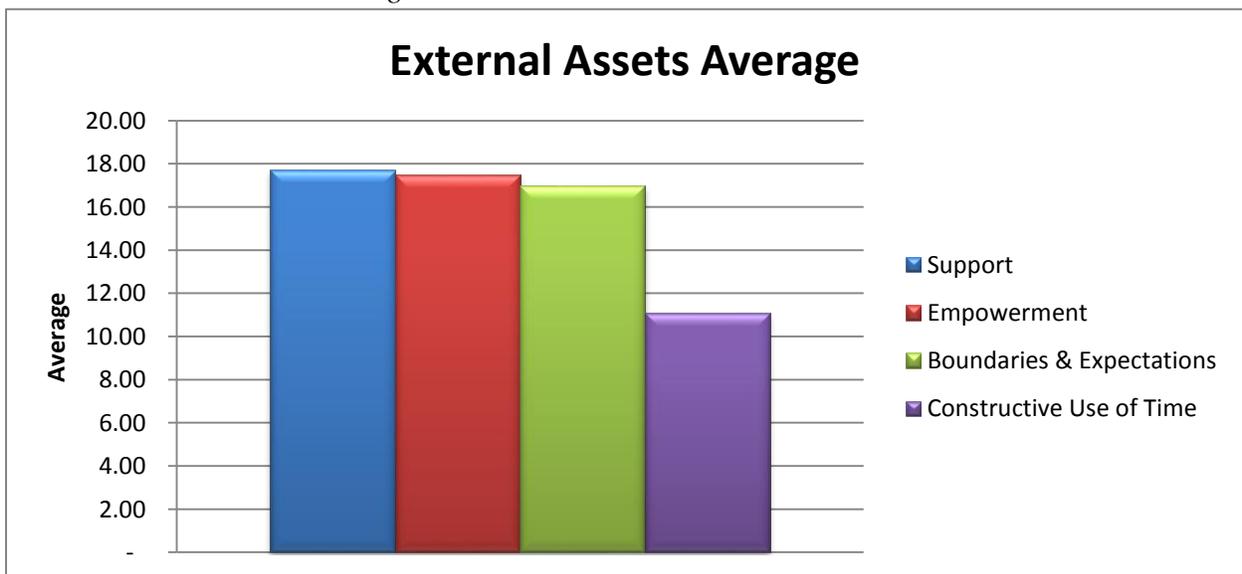


Table 5 shows all four external asset areas compared with each other.

Table 5: *External Asset Average*



Internal Assets

Of the four internal asset areas, Commitment to Learning on Table 6 had the lowest average score of 13.49 and a standard deviation of 6.48, also making it a low score according to the Search Institute.

Table 6: *Commitment to Learning*

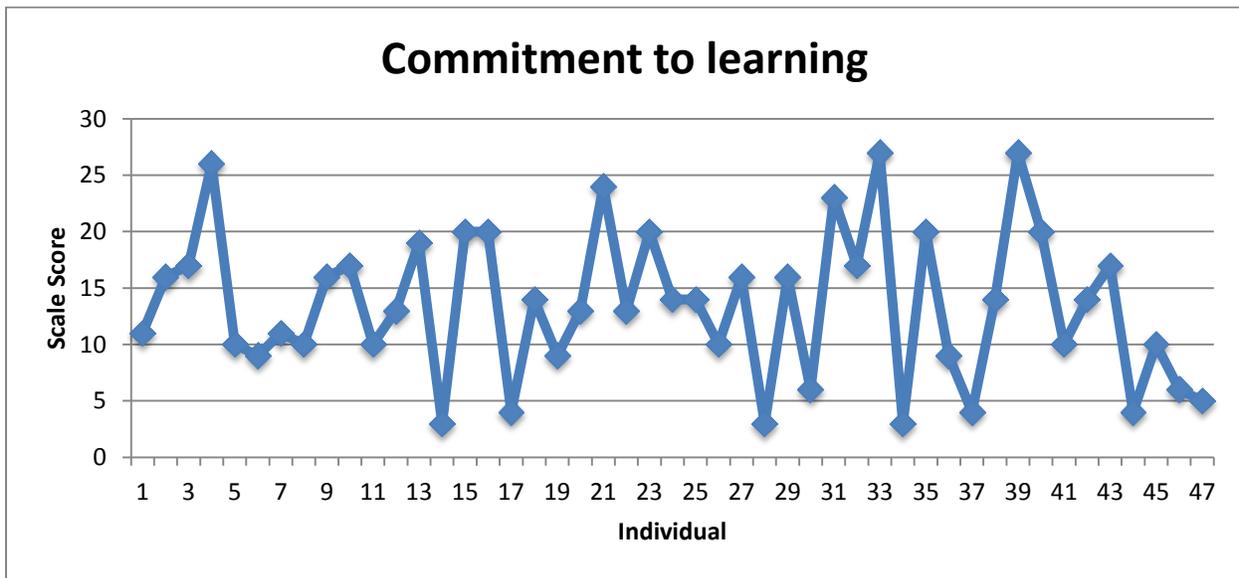
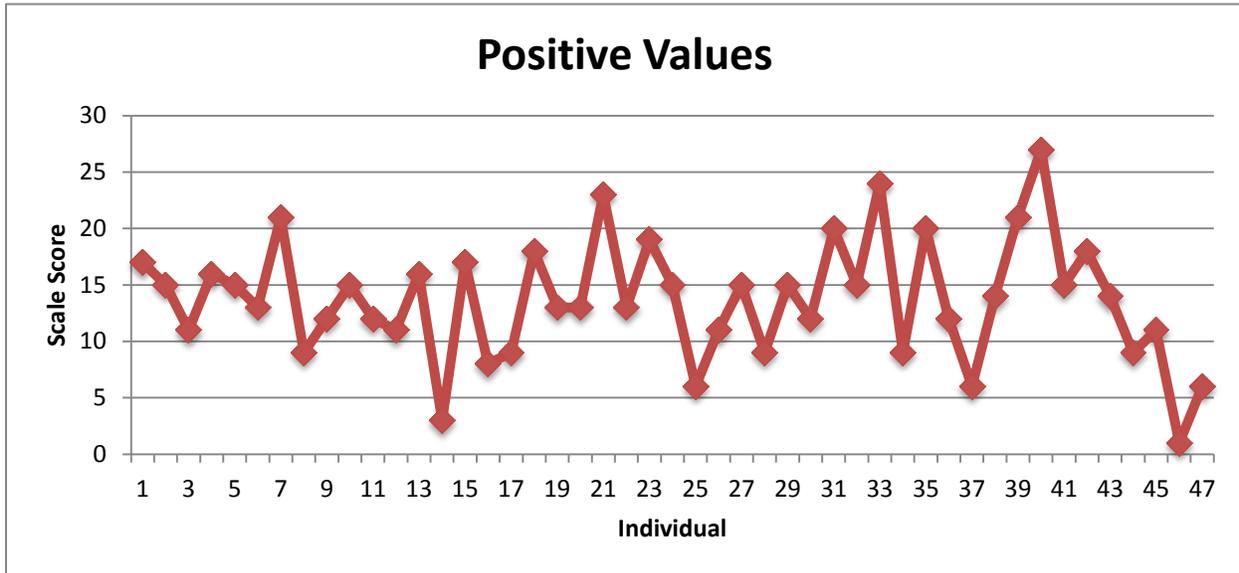


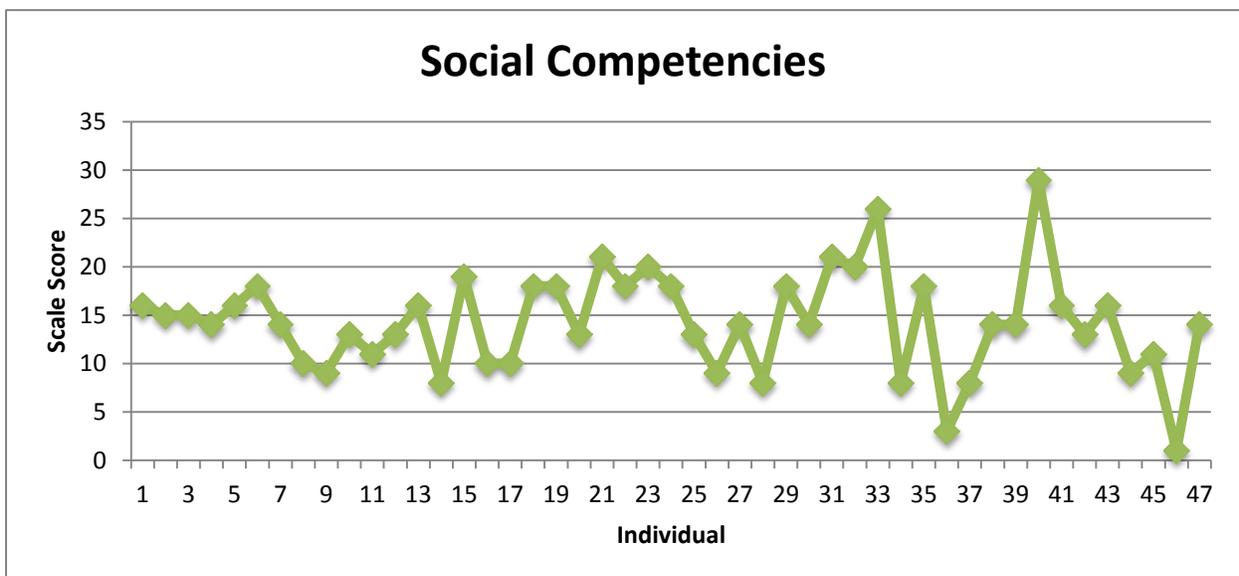
Table 7, Positive Values had an average of 13.70 and a standard deviation of 5.27. Positive Values had the second highest mean in the category of internal asset areas but still is considered a low score.

Table 7: *Positive Values*



Social Competencies on Table 8 was ranked highest in internal asset areas with a mean of 14.26 and a standard deviation of 5.21. This average score would be considered to be between low and fair according to the Search Institute.

Table 8: *Social Competencies*



The final area in internal assets was Positive Identity on Table 9 with a mean of 13.60 and a standard deviation of 6.16. Positive Identity was ranked third of the four asset areas. This asset area received a low average score according to the Search Institute.

Table 9: *Positive Identity*

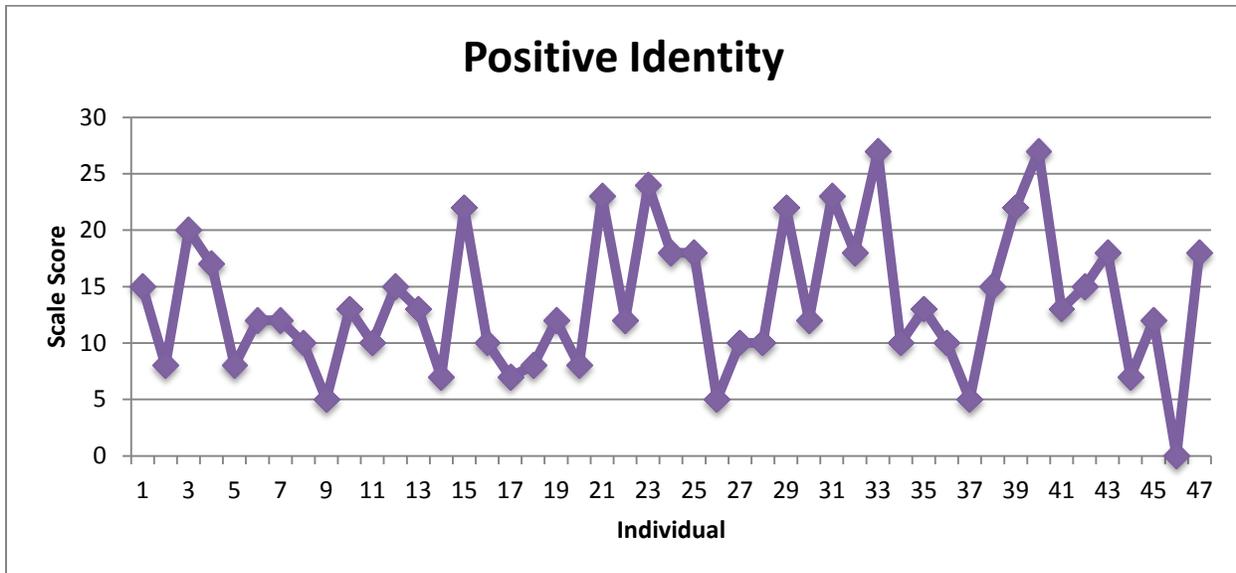


Table 10 represents the average scores of all four internal assets compared with each other

Table 10: *Internal Assets Average*

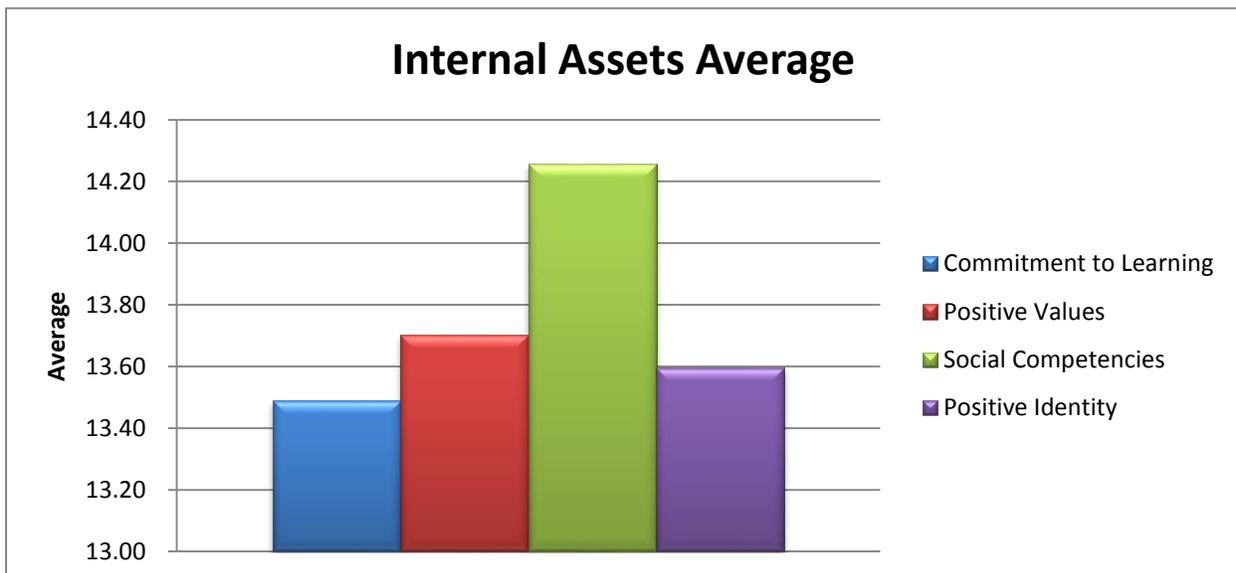
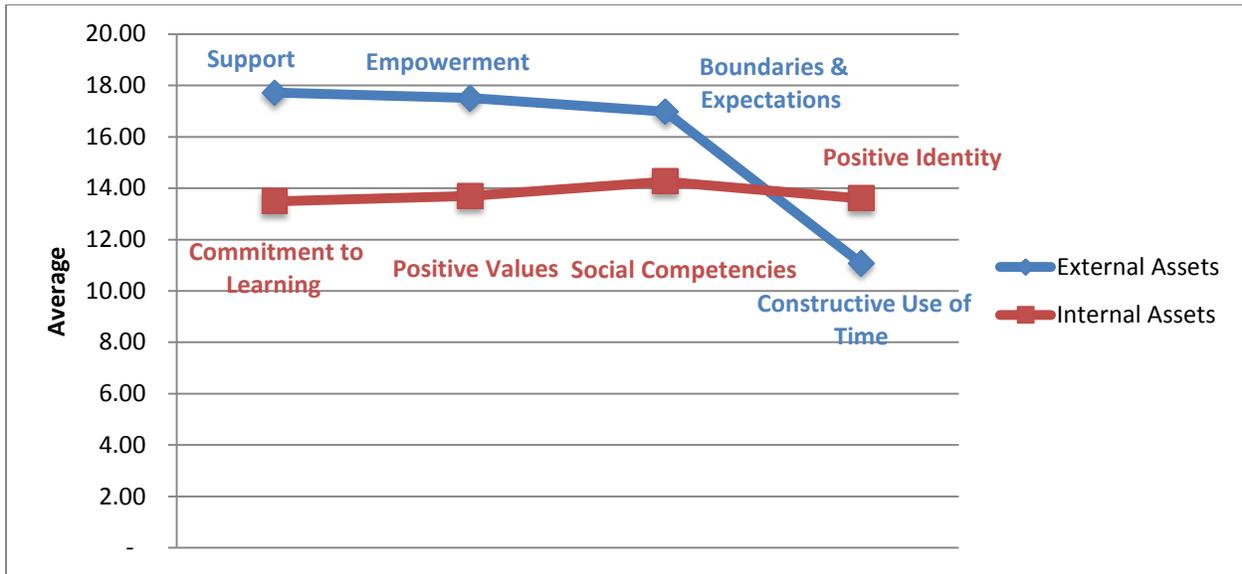


Table 11 shows the average score of each internal asset area compared with the average score of each external asset area.

Table 11: Internal vs. External Asset Area Averages



Context Areas

Developmental Assets can also be applied to five context areas, Personal, Social, Family, School, and Community. Table 12 represents the Personal context area with a mean of 13.62 and a standard deviation of 4.76. This context area received the second lowest average score making it fit into the category of a low average score.

Table 12: *Personal Context Area*

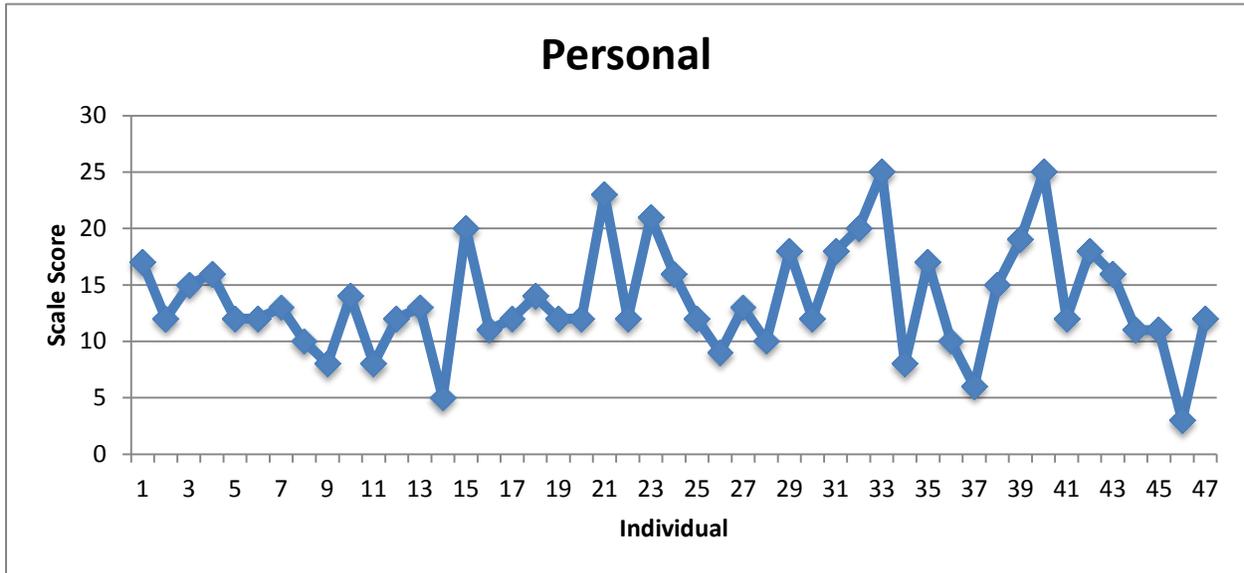
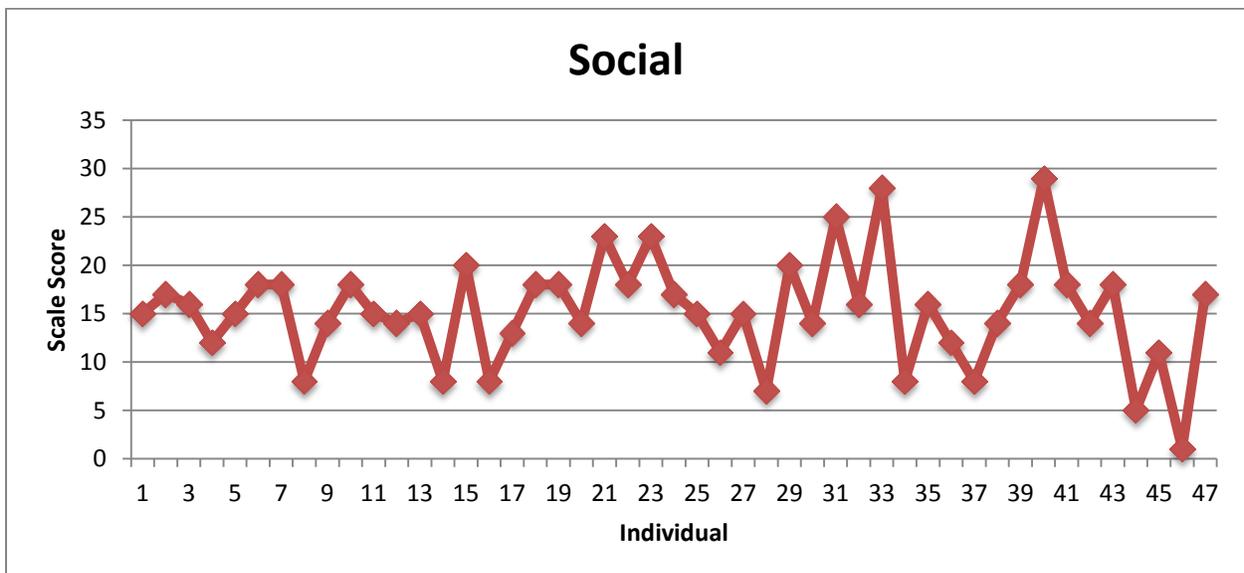


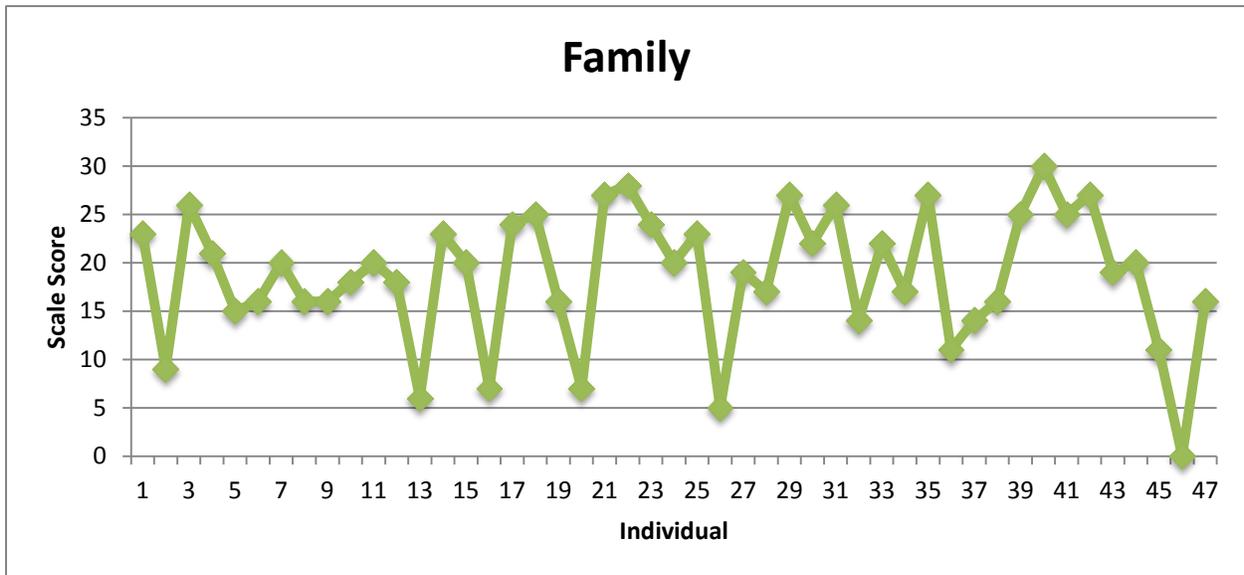
Table 13 shows the individual scores of the Social Context. Social had the second highest score with a mean of 15.21 and a standard deviation of 5.46. The Social context area would be categorized as a fair score.

Table 13: *Social Context Area*



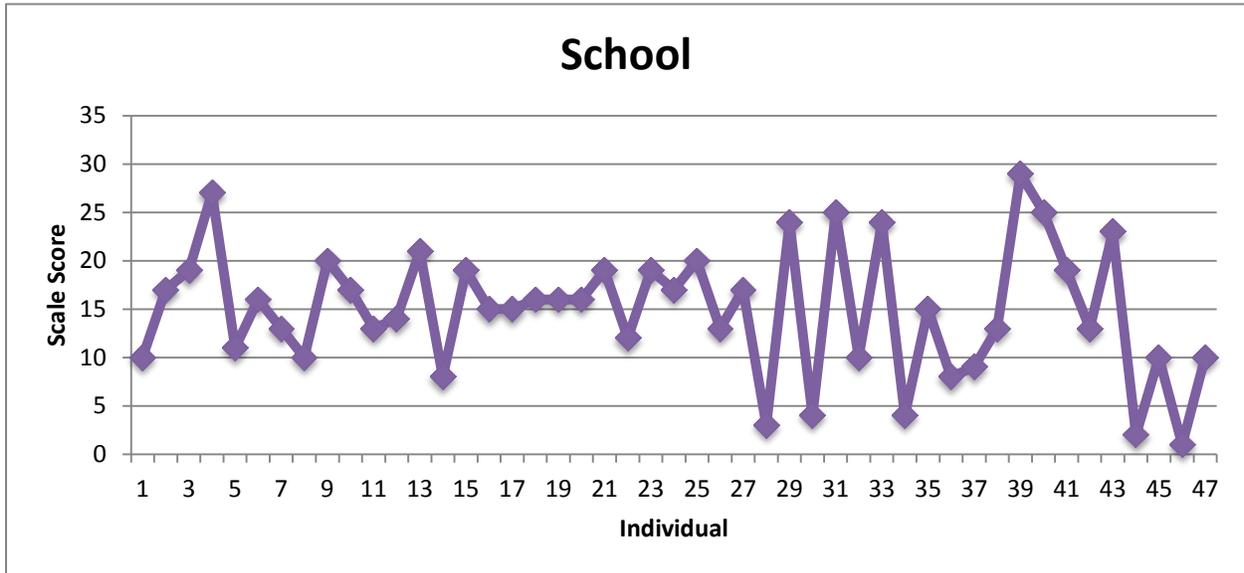
The Family context area on Table 14 had a mean score of 18.68 and a standard deviation of 6.77. According to the Search Institute, this would indicate a fair average score. Family was ranked highest among the five context areas.

Table 14: *Family Context Area*



The School context area on Table 15 received a low to fair score with an average of 14.91 and a standard deviation of 6.54. School was ranked third of the five context areas.

Table 15: *School Context Area*



Community received the lowest score in the context areas with an average of 13.00 and a standard deviation of 5.61. This is shown on Table 16.

Table 16: *Community Context Area*

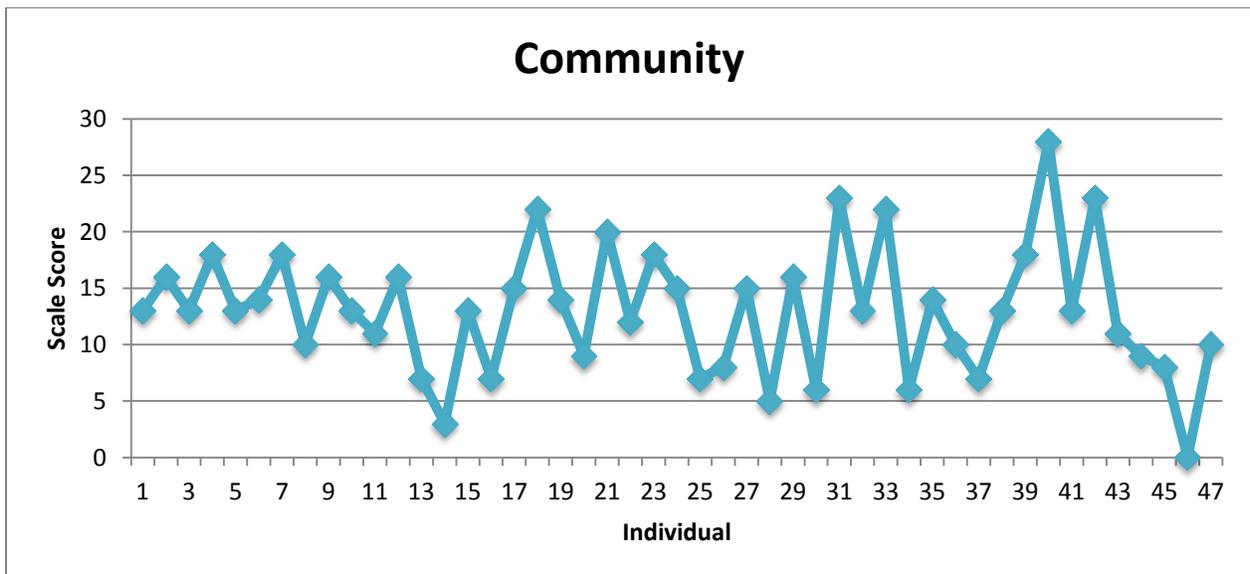
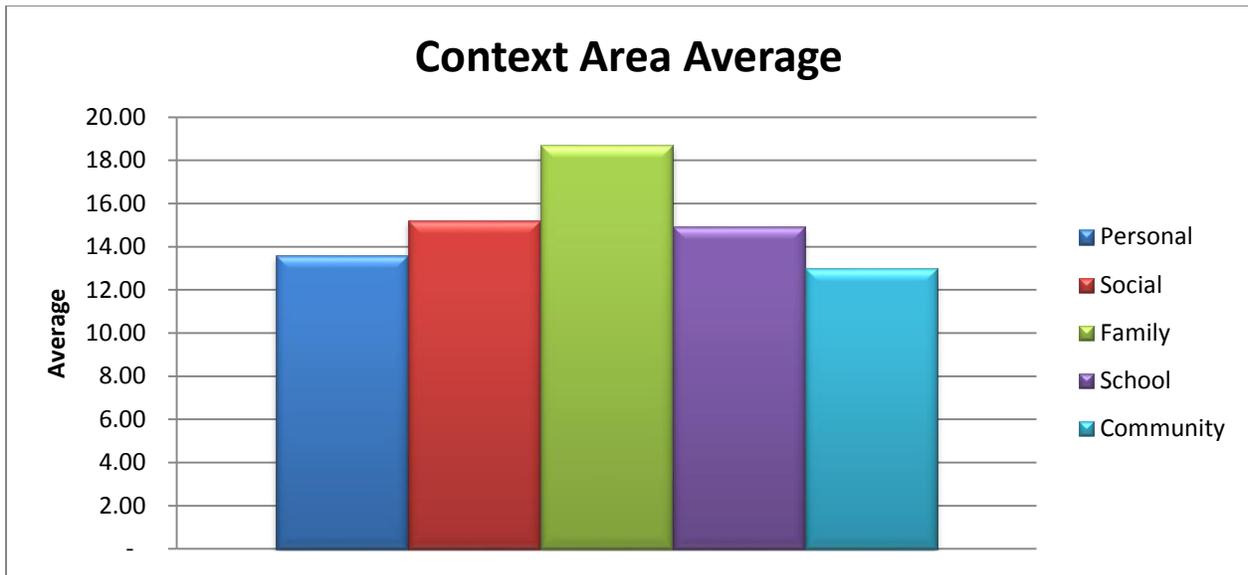


Table 17 represents all five average context area scores compared with each other.

Table 17: *Contest Area Averages*



Discussion

The purpose of this study was to identify which developmental assets adolescents were lacking when admitted to a residential rehabilitation facility. The developmental asset profile was used from the Search Institute which measures forty developmental assets that can be broken down into four internal and external asset areas as well as five context areas. The hypothesis stated that adolescents would be lowest in the internal asset area of Positive Identity, the external asset area of Constructive Use of Time, and lowest in the context area of Family.

The internal assets the areas include, Commitment to Learning, Positive Values, Social Competencies, and Positive Identity. Adolescents scored lowest in Commitment to Learning, with Positive Identity being the second lowest score. Social Competencies was the highest score with Positive Values being the second highest score. It is important to note that each asset area’s average score was below fifteen. According to the Search Institute any score below fifteen is an indication of “low assets”. The hypothesis of the lowest asset area being Positive Identity was

proven to be incorrect. These scores suggest that clients in the rehab could benefit from exploration into barriers to their learning. Clients often skip school, are expelled, or drop out due to their drug use or behaviors that the school is unable to manage. A low score in positive identity can be explained by past trauma that the youth have experienced, legal and social implications from their drug use, as well as guilt that many feel from disappointing their families. Individual therapy can be utilized to explore client's identity as well as ways to improve their self-esteem and sense of worth.

The external asset areas include Support, Empowerment, Boundaries and Expectations, and Constructive Use of Time. Support received the highest score, with Empowerment, Boundaries and Expectations, and Constructive Use of Time following respectively. Support, Empowerment, and Boundaries and Expectations all had average scores above fifteen which indicate a "fair" amount of external assets in those areas. The average score for Constructive Use of Time was below fifteen, indicating a "low" amount of assets in this area. The hypothesis of Constructive Use of Time receiving the lowest score was proven correct in the external asset area. It seems to make sense that Constructive Use of Time had the lowest score. Clients in the rehab often complain that they are bored and do not know what their interests are upon admission. Many describe the reason for this as spending all of their time seeking or using drugs before treatment. An important component for successful treatment as well as increasing developmental assets will be to work with youth in identifying new interests and hobbies that do not include drug use. The program can utilize their recreational therapist as well as staff to organize activities that youth can participate in. Structured free time should also be utilized as a way for youth to practice and find new interests that do not involve drug use. Staff can support

the youth by participating in free time activities with the youth as well as offering suggestions as to what the youth may want to try.

The context areas include Personal, Family, Social, School, and Community were also measured. The 40 developmental assets, including internal and external assets are all measured within the context areas. Family had the highest average score with Social, School, Personal, and Community following respectively. The researcher's hypothesis of Family receiving the lowest score was proven wrong as it received the highest average score. The School, Personal, and Community context areas all received average scores below fifteen, indicating "low" assets in these context areas. Family and Social context areas scored in the "fair" range. The low score in Community suggests that clients do not have a strong connection to their community. A possible explanation for this may be because the community in which they live is not safe or does not have programs and activities geared toward keeping youth safe and productive. It is possible that the community does offer support and programs but that the youth and their families do not know about them or take advantage of them.

The findings from this study support previous research that suggests that adolescents with low developmental assets are more likely to engage in high risk behaviors, have problems in school, use alcohol and other substances, and have legal issues (Chew et al., 2010) The clients who participated in this study all have a chemical dependency diagnosis in which they are addressing while in treatment. In addition, many of the internal and external asset areas the average score was below fifteen which suggests that clients are low in those specific asset areas. Clients are not only addressing substance abuse issues they have which may have correlated with having low developmental assets before treatment but they are also displaying low assets upon treatment in which they can use more support.

Taylor et al. (2004) conducted a study on youth in a juvenile justice center and found that clients scored low on internal and external assets while in treatment and benefited from programming and structured activities aimed at helping clients develop more assets. The results of this study also support Taylor et al.'s (2004) findings as average asset scores were below fifteen showing a severe lack of assets. With the results of this study as well as knowing what other researchers have found, it is recommended that the program studied organize and structure more programs that can help youth develop. Programs that specifically focus on building positive identity, community involvement, constructive use of time, and commitment to learning are recommended and it is hoped that strengthening these asset areas will help clients to be more successful after treatment.

Implications for Future Practice

It is important to note that youth are often still under the influence or are experiencing acute withdrawal when taking the DAP upon admission. It is likely that the results are skewed due to the youth completing the profile under the influence or when experiencing side effects of withdrawal. When clients are under the influence they also appear to have an inflated sense of ego and present with a sense of invincibility. It is possible that scores on the admission DAP may be higher than scores on the three months from admission DAP as clients may have a skewed sense of reality. Parents are also present when youth complete the DAP. Because of the personal questions it asks about the youth and their family it may be wise to have youth complete the DAP when they are not in the presence of their family.

Suggestions for Future Research

This study was only able to measure developmental assets upon admission. Future research could compare DAP's upon admission to DAP's at discharge to see if youth gained any assets while in treatment. It would also be helpful to see the longevity of developmental assets. Future research could follow clients for several months to years beyond discharge to see how stable and lasting their assets are.

Limitations

There are several limitations to this study in which future researchers will want to be aware of. First, clients receive the Developmental Asset Profile upon admission to the residential rehab. Some questions on the profile may be viewed as invasive as they are very personal questions. Clients who are already resistant to treatment or have not established a trusting relationship with staff may not answer the questions truthfully, distorting their measure of developmental assets. Second, clients often come in still under the influence of substances. Because the profile is given on the first day, clients have not experienced "clean time" in which they can think with a clear mind and answer the questions honestly. The final limitation is that when taking the profile, clients have not begun to work with their therapist in order to explore their context areas. Clients may have a thwarted view on their lives and the people in them.

Concluding Remarks

This study supports existing research in that youth with low developmental assets are more likely to engage in high risk behaviors, substance abuse, and illegal activities. This is evident by all youth in the residential rehabilitation studied having low internal and external assets and engaging all of these issues. The results collected from this study will be taken back to

the program studied and discussed with the program manager. It is the researcher's hope that new programs and curricula will be designed around each asset area in order to help clients not only become sober but to develop more assets in which they can use as protective factors in order to have a successful life and remain sober after treatment.

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