Examining Another Source of Recruitment for Agriculture Education Teachers

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Need For Research

❖ One mission of school-based agricultural education (SBAE) is to prepare youth for careers in agriculture and STEM fields (Fraze & Briers, 1987; Phipps et al., 2008)

❖ Shortage of qualified agriculture teachers (Foster et al., 2014)

❖ Shortage skilled workers in agriculture (Goeker et al., 2015; U.S. Congress Joint Economic Committee, 2012)

❖ Solving the teacher shortage issue is critical in meeting the scientific and professional workforce demands of the 21st century (Stripling & Ricketts, 2016)

❖ Recruitment and retention
Most common source of recruitment is from within SBAE (Arrington, 1985; Hillison, Camp & Burke, 1987; Park & Rudd, 2005)

Research into other sources is recommended (Lawver & Torres, 2011)

Lack of current literature about atypical (non-SBAE) individuals in agricultural education (Lawver & Torres, 2011)
Research Goals

❖ Explore the factors influencing atypical pre-service and early career teachers to pursue agricultural education

❖ Examine the unique challenges atypical pre-service and early career teachers face in agricultural education
Research Questions

Why do atypical individuals not participate in SBAE?

Why do atypical individuals choose to major in Agricultural Education?

What challenges do atypical individuals experience in Agricultural Education?

What is the perceived career commitment among atypical individuals?
Methods

Qualitative, phenomenological design

Theoretical Framework: Fit-Choice Model (Watt & Richardson 2007)

Purposive sampling for maximum variation (Patton, 2002)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Characteristic</th>
<th>Number (n = 8)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Male</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Female</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pre-service teachers</td>
<td>6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>In-service (1-2 years)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-White</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>White</td>
<td>7</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non traditional (age)</td>
<td>2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Traditional (age)</td>
<td>6</td>
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Methods: Data Collection

- Semi-structured interviews
  - 5 participants; 2 interviews
  - About 60 minutes each
  - Audio recorded and transcribed verbatim

- Written responses
  - 3 participants via email

- Questions to elicit information regarding atypical individuals’ experiences in agricultural education
Methods: Data Analysis

- Data analyzed and coded for thematic content
  - Open, axial, selective coding (Auerbach & Silverstein, 2003)

- Rigor and Trustworthiness (Denzin & Lincoln, 2011)
  - Credibility (reflective journal)
  - Transferability (purposive sampling, descriptions of participants)
  - Dependability (audit trail)
  - Triangulation (multiple sources, independent coding)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Conceptual Model of Findings</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Why did you choose Agriculture Education?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Influencers</td>
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<tr>
<td>Previous Experience</td>
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<tr>
<td>Values</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Why did you not participate in SBAE?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Other distractions</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Lack of knowledge/availability</td>
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<tr>
<td>Negative Perceptions</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What Challenges do you experience?</strong></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feeling of inadequacy</td>
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<tr>
<td>Outside group/lack of belonging</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>What is your level of career commitment?</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>Fallback career is important</td>
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<tr>
<td>Teaching experience may influence commitment level</td>
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Key Conclusions

❖ All themes regarding participants’ choice to teach align with the FIT-Choice Model
❖ Reasons to teach among atypical and SBAE individuals do not differ

❖ Atypical individuals have unique challenges in Agricultural Education
❖ FFA is the root challenge
   ❖ Outsider; inadequacy

❖ Fallback career is important to atypical individuals
Recommendations for Ag Teachers

❖ Connect with groups beyond SBAE & FFA
  ❖ 4-H, school clubs and organizations, community youth organizations, etc.

❖ Rebrand programs for more inclusivity
  ❖ Emphasize leadership, community service, and focus on diversity
Recommendations for Agriculture Teacher Educators

- Adapt curriculum and planned experiences to meet the needs of both atypical and SBAE students
- Encourage Agricultural Education internships, clubs, and volunteer opportunities
- Create more teaching opportunities to increase commitment
Recommendations for Research

- Quantitative research, national scope
  - How influential and significant are these findings (themes) in Agricultural Education?
  - Is Utah unique?

- How can the challenges of atypical students and teachers be overcome?
Thank You!

What questions do you have?

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