



Leading Factors Impacting a Novice Agriculture Teachers Decision to Stay in the Profession



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INTRODUCTION

- Every year school-based agricultural education (SBAE) teachers are exiting the profession at alarming rates, causing key stakeholders within agricultural education to take notice.
- Consequently, teacher attrition has been deemed a major contributor hindering the growth of SBAE programs in the United States.
- Many studies have examined why SBAE teachers leave, but few have identified why they remain in the profession.

PURPOSE & OBJECTIVES

- The purpose of this descriptive study was to investigate factors contributing to the reasons novice Illinois SBAE teachers stay in the profession.
- Specific objectives of the study were to:
 - (1) Describe the demographic characteristics of novice SBAE teachers who remain in the profession.
 - (2) Determine leading factors influencing an novice SBAE teacher’s decision to remain in the profession.

CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

- The conceptual framework used for this study was from research conducted by Solomonson et al. (2018).
- The agriculture teacher retention/attrition model proposed one or more job-specific variables, within one or more of their four constructs of influence (personal factors, working conditions, compensation, and teacher development), may impact SBAE teacher retention/attrition.

METHODOLOGY

- An electronic questionnaire was administered to all current SBAE teachers in Illinois via Qualtrics during a 4 week data collection period. Data were analyzed using SPSS.
- Demographic data were used to separate teachers based on years of experience. Seventy (n = 70) novice teachers (1-5 years of experience) responded to the questionnaire.

FINDINGS

- Results reveal the top reasons experienced Illinois SBAE teachers remain in the profession. (Table 1)

Table 1

Top 10 Factors Impacting a Novice SBAE Teachers' Decision to Stay in the Profession (n = 70)

Variable	SI %	Mdn	Md	M	SD
Teacher's Ability to Engage Students	77.1	5	5	4.69	0.649
Supportive School Building Administration & School Board	71.4	5	5	4.60	0.710
Teacher's Attitude Towards Students	71.4	5	5	4.60	0.750
Having a Supportive Family	71.0	5	5	4.46	0.994
Meeting Personal Expectations as a Teacher	67.1	5	5	4.54	0.793
Positive School Environment	67.1	5	5	4.57	0.734
Employment Location	65.7	5	5	4.43	0.941
Level of Personal Accomplishment as a Teacher	62.9	5	5	4.43	0.878
[NAME OF GRANT]/Extended Contract	60.3	5	5	4.27	1.167
Highly Motivated Students	59.4	5	5	4.41	0.863

Note. Five-point Likert-type scale with 1= Did not Impact and 5= Strongly Impacted. SI %= percentage of those indicating the factor strongly impacted their decision to stay; Mdn = Median; Md = Mode; M = Mean; SD = Standard deviation.

CONCLUSIONS & RECOMMENDATIONS

- Of the 10 leading factors that contribute to novice SBAE teachers decision to remain in the profession, 8 factors fell within the working conditions and personal factors constructs of influence.
- These findings may assist SBAE stakeholders as they develop recruitment and retention plans within their state in addition to directing purposeful professional development for those in specific professional career stages.
- It is recommended university teacher preparation programs and SBAE state staff provide purposeful professional development and revise existing coursework to increase self-efficacy in these areas deemed important by our novice teachers.

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