

Sense of Belonging in First Year Agriculture Teachers During a Pandemic

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Introduction

- COVID-19 drastically changed teaching practices
- Agriculture teachers' job satisfaction dropped during pandemic
- New teachers who lack a sense of belonging will be more likely to leave the profession
- A sense of belonging – the degree to which one feels they share common interests, experiences, expertise, and desires with others in the school community

Methods

- Population – 1st year SBAE teachers during 2019-2020 school year ($n = 9$)
- Pre-Test (Fall 2019 & Post-Test (May 2020)
- Non-Parametric Wilcoxon signed exact rank t -test & rank biserial correlations (effect size)
- 4 sections – Sense of Belonging Scale (Hoffman)
 - 1) Perceived Peer Support
 - 2) Perceived Comfort
 - 3) Perceived Isolation
 - 4) Perceived Faculty/Professional Support

Results –

All dimensions of teachers' sense of belonging dropped during the pandemic with Peer Support & Faculty Support being the most significant drop

Changes in First-Year Agriculture Teacher Sense of Belonging

Construct	<i>M</i> (Pre)	<i>SD</i>	<i>M</i> (Post)	<i>SD</i>	<i>W</i>	<i>p</i>	Effect
Perceived Peer Support	5.26	0.49	4.56	0.41	-2.37	.018	.790
Perceived Faculty Support	5.25	0.87	4.31	0.63	-1.97	.049	.657
Perceived Comfort	4.67	0.78	4.33	0.55	-0.95	.344	.315
Perceived Isolation	2.26	0.91	1.75	0.78	-0.98	.326	.328

Note. Construct items scaled from 1 “Strongly Disagree” to 6 “Strongly Agree”

Conclusion & Impact on Profession

- **Conclusion 1:** The pandemic impacted first year teachers' sense of belonging. comfort could be a result of the pandemic. Teachers likely felt less comfortable teaching remotely and felt like they had less of a support system during the pandemic.
- **Conclusion 2:** First year agriculture teachers do not feel isolated.
- **Conclusion 3:** Helping teachers develop a strong sense of belonging within their community of practice is critical to keeping teachers in the profession.

