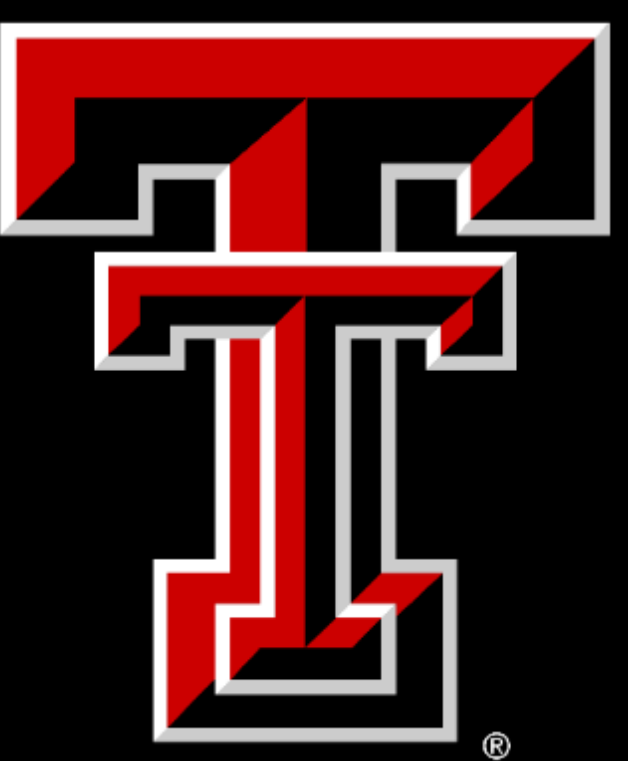


Experiences of Alternatively Certified Agricultural Teachers in Texas

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Introduction

- Teacher shortages are a national concern (Castro et al., 2018).
- Alternative certification offers an additional pathway to the teaching career field (Clafin et al., 2020).
- During the 2018 academic year, 22.8% of the total hires earned a certification using an alternative pathway (Smith et al., 2018).
- Currently in Texas, there is no tracking system to identify alternatively certified agriculture teachers.
- How are we to address and support the needs of these teachers if we don't know who they are?
- Alternatively certified teachers in Texas must already possess a bachelor's degree and utilize an approved preparation program instead of a traditional undergraduate program (Texas Education Agency, n.d.).

Theoretical Framework

- Based on the expectancy-value theory (Atkinson, 1957; Eccles et al., 1983).
- Individuals will choose behaviors that are based on the outcomes that are expected and values they believe in (Borders et al., 2004).
- Success expectancies and task valuation are driving forces for motivation (Watt & Richardson, 2007).
- Can be used to explain individual's career motivations for choosing to enter the education field using an alternative pathway.

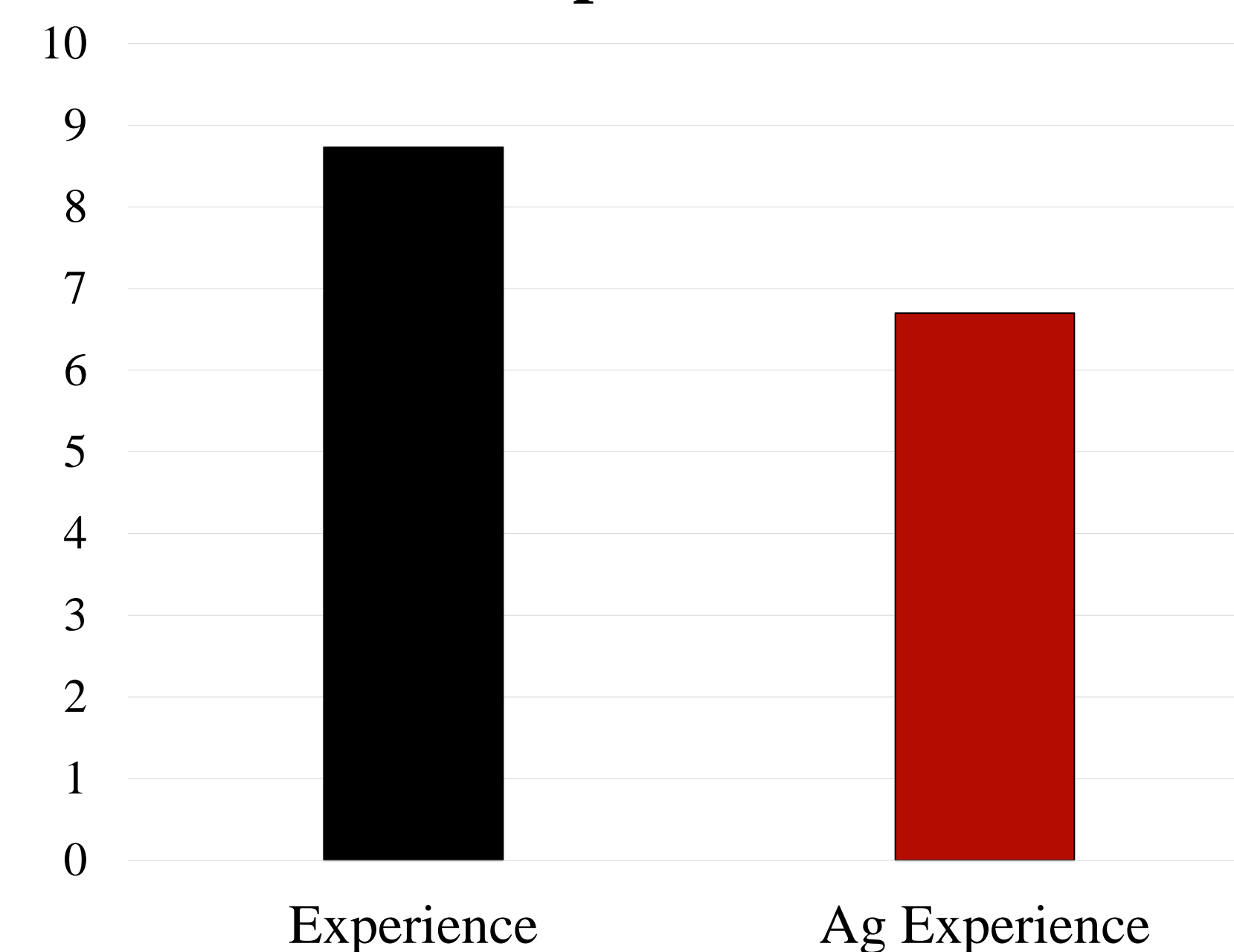
Purpose and Objectives

- The study sought to establish baseline documentation of the alternative certification pathway for teachers in Texas.
- The research objectives included:
 1. Describe certification path and status of alternatively certified Ag Teachers in Texas.
 2. Describe experience and education of alternatively certified Ag Teachers in Texas.

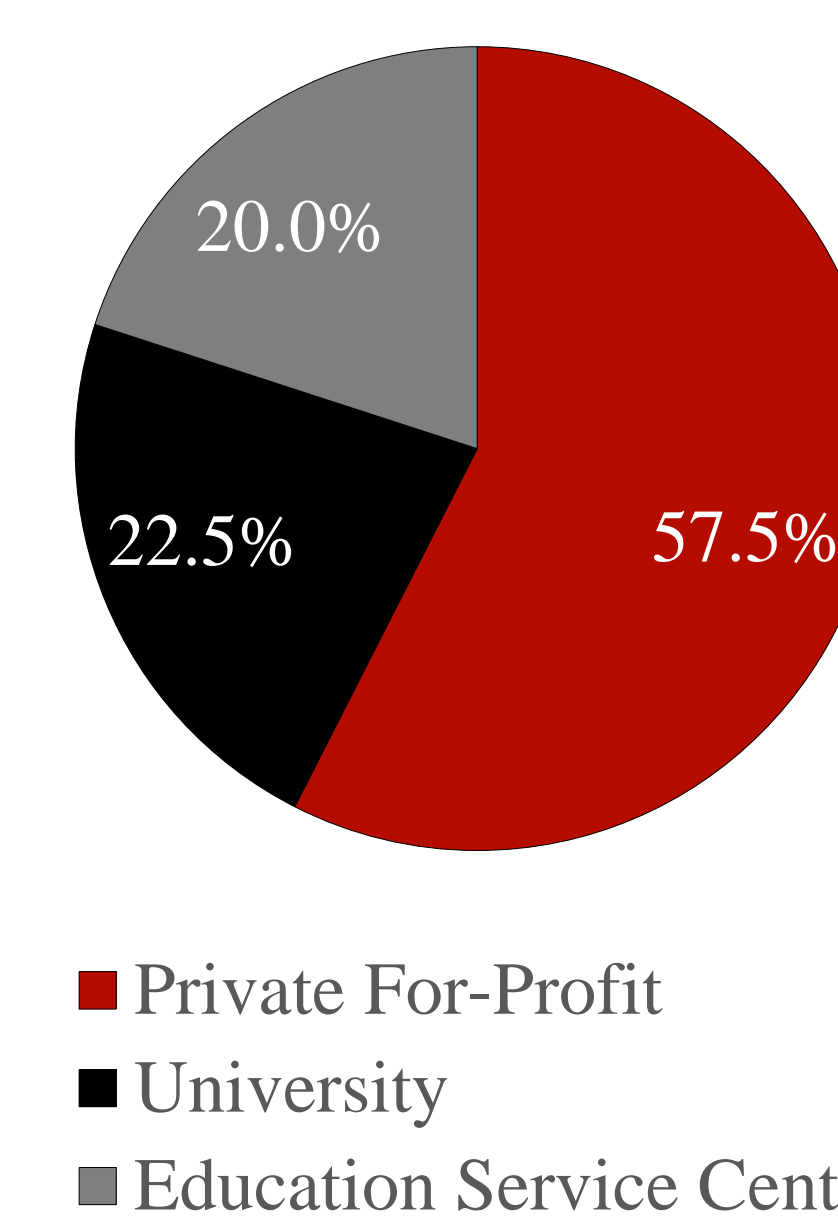
Methodology

- An exploratory online survey study was conducted.
- Since there is no mechanism to target only alternatively certified agriculture teachers, the survey link was sent to all members of the Agricultural Teachers Association of Texas (ATAT).
- An email was sent to the ATAT's executive director for distribution.
- A reminder email was sent 10 days later.
- The convenience sampling strategy yielded 259 responses.
- Forty respondents identified their certification path as alternative (N = 40).

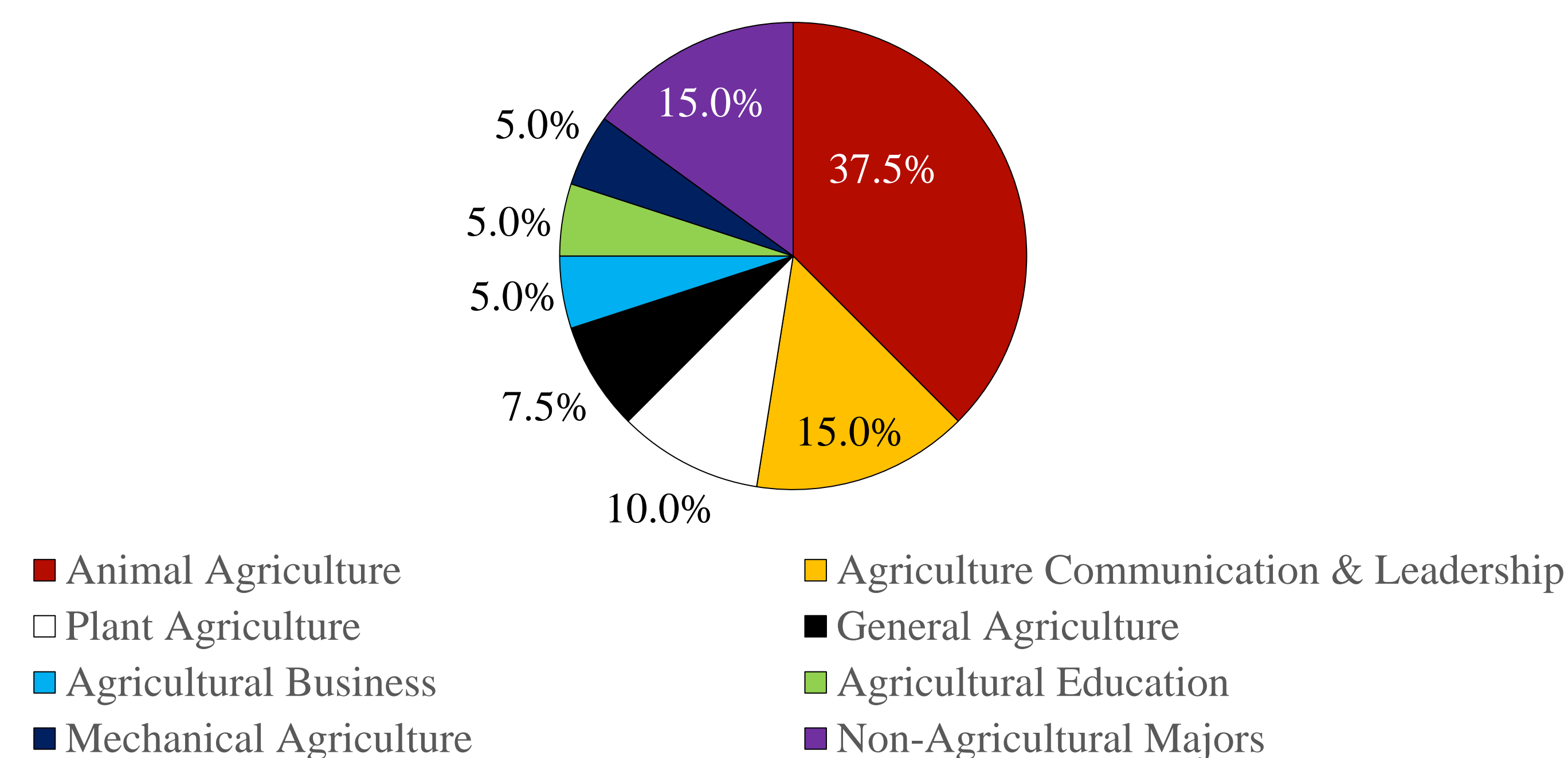
Average Years of Teaching Experience



Program Used for Alternative Certification



Bachelor's Degree Content Area



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Results

- Alternatively certified Ag Teachers had almost nine years of experience ($M = 8.73$, $Md = 5.50$, $SD = 7.06$).
- Most of their teaching experience was in Ag ($M = 6.70$, $Md = 4.00$, $SD = 6.12$).
- The majority had earned only a bachelor's degree (67.5%).
- Most of the bachelor's degrees (85%) were in an agricultural related field.
- Many of the alternatively certified Ag Teachers (62.5%) only held an agriculture teaching certificate.
- Most (75.0%) earned their initial certification in agriculture.
- Private for-profit programs were used most often (57.5%), followed by university programs (22.5%) and education service centers (20%).

Conclusions and Recommendations

- The study found 15.44% of the sample to be alternatively certified.
- Private for-profit certification programs were utilized by the majority.
- Future research should evaluate why specific programs were used versus others.
- Alternatively certified Ag Teachers averaged more years of teaching experience versus only agriculture teaching experience.
- Individuals are entering the teaching field in another content area and then obtaining an agriculture certification.
- The motivating factors for seeking an agriculture teaching certification and position should be evaluated.
- Understanding the background and previous experiences of alternatively certified Ag Teachers can help with recruitment efforts.