

Investigating Identity and the Integration of Alternatively Certified Teachers in the School-Based Agricultural Education Profession

Matthew J. Wood, Tyson J. Sorensen

Introduction & Theoretical Framework

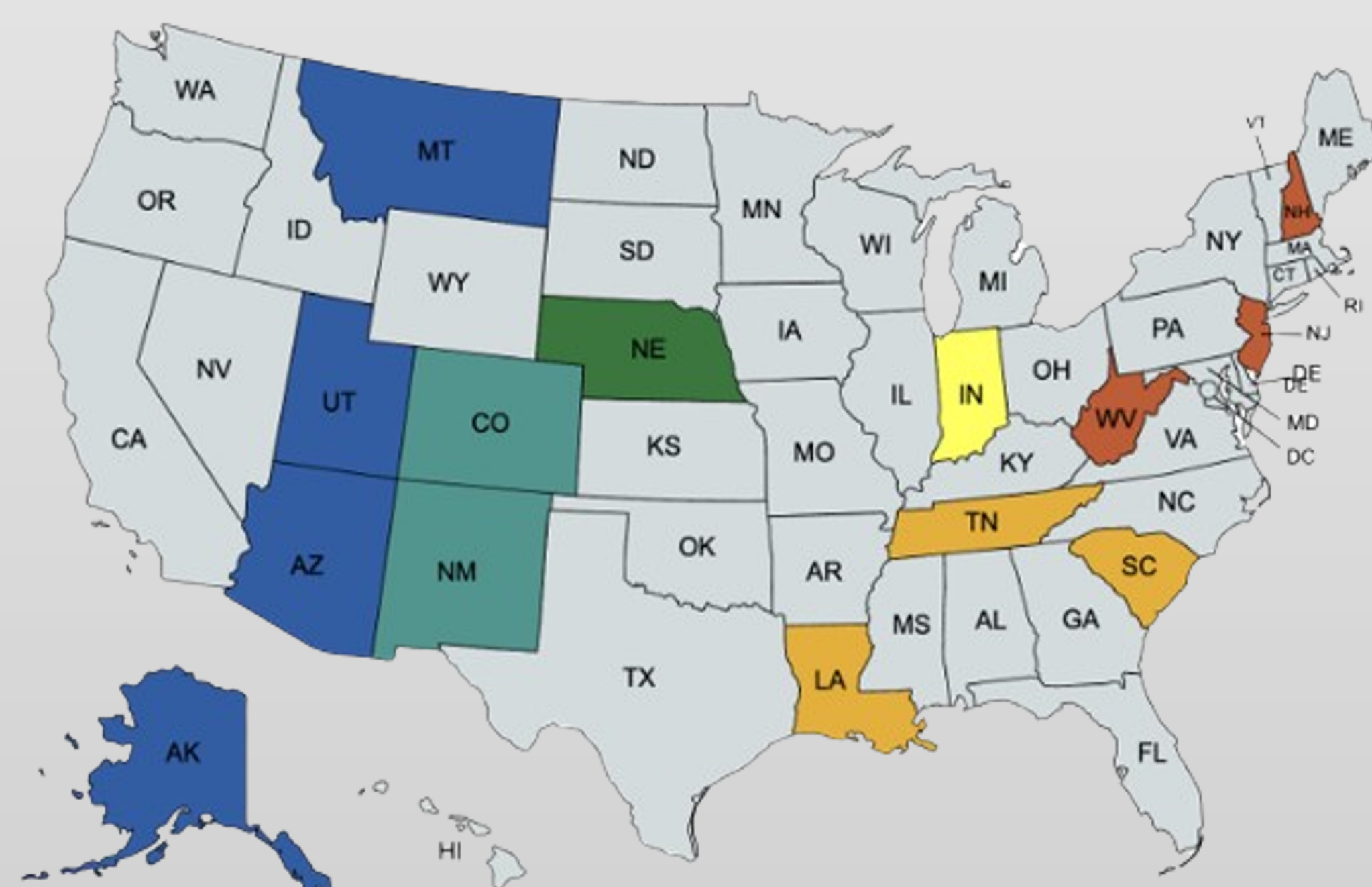
- Professional identity is a crucial factor influencing the success and dedication of educators in the teaching field (Canrinus, 2011).
- Teachers with a robust professional identity tend to experience great job satisfaction and more involvement in professional development (Skaalvik & Skaalvik, 2011).
- Knobloch & Whittington (2003) found that novice SBAE teachers with high self-efficacy also demonstrated strong professional identities.
- Given the challenges recruiting and retaining SBAE teachers, and the influx of alternatively certified teachers being hired, it is important to explore and support the professional identities of these teachers
- A myriad of factors have been identified to influence the professional identities of teachers. Specifically, self-efficacy has been linked to career commitment and retention (Bandura, 1997; McKim & Velez, 2015).

Methodology

- **Objective:** Describe the professional identities of alternatively certified SBAE teachers.
- **Target Population:** Cluster sampling was used, categorizing teachers by NAAE region. Random sampling was then employed to sample all SBAE teachers in a state or series of states within that cluster.
- **Data Collection:** Data was collected during October of 2023 using Qualtrics
- **Survey Instrument:** Series of professional identity statements adapted from Starr et al. (2006). Teachers used a five-point Likert-type scale to rank each statement.
- **Response Rate:** 398 SBAE teachers completed the survey with 34.9% ($n = 139$) identifying as alternatively certified.



Surveyed States by NAAE Region



Results

Self-Assessment of Professional Identity among Alternatively Certified SBAE Teachers

Professional Identity Statement	SA %	A %	N %	D %	SD %
It is important for me to develop my teaching skills	47.5	46.9	4.9	0.0	0.7
I see myself as a teacher	51.0	39.2	7.7	1.4	0.7
I would miss teaching if I stopped doing it	38.7	47.9	10.6	2.8	0.0
Students and colleagues view me as an effective teacher	37.1	42.6	18.9	1.4	0.0
I feel skilled as a teacher	34.9	43.4	15.4	5.6	0.7
I belong to a community of teachers	36.3	39.2	16.8	5.6	2.1
I frequently talk to colleagues about teaching	20.3	51.0	20.3	7.0	1.4
I feel that my building/district administration support my efforts as an agriculture teacher	28.0	37.0	16.1	11.2	7.7
It is important for me to work in the teaching profession	25.9	37.7	24.5	8.4	3.5
I know very few agriculture teachers in the profession	27.3	33.5	18.9	12.6	7.7

Note. SA = Strongly Agree, A = Agree, N = Neutral, D = Disagree, SD = Strongly Disagree.

Overall, alternatively certified teachers generally view their professional identity favorably.

Highest rated:

- 1) It is important for me to develop my teaching skills; 2) I see myself as a teacher; and 3) I would miss teaching if I stopped doing it

Lowest rated:

- 1) I know very few agriculture teachers in the profession; 2) It is important for me to work in the teaching profession; and 3) I feel that my building/district administration support my efforts as an agriculture teacher.

Conclusions/Recommendations

- While alternatively certified teachers identify with their role, they:
 - Experience less support from administration
 - Place less emphasis on remaining in the profession
 - Face challenges integrating into the SBAE community.
- The SBAE profession is welcoming, yet exclusive where integration can be challenging.
- Future research should focus on exploring support systems and professional networks available for alternatively certified teachers.
- Future research should delve into the challenges these teachers face integrating into the profession and strategies to enhance their sense of belonging within the profession.