

Content Analysis of Summer California Job Postings for Ag Teaching Positions

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Introduction/Need

School-based agricultural education (SBAE) teachers play a crucial role in developing the next innovators and problem solvers within the agriculture industry (Still & Solomonson, 2024). As teachers consider places to apply, transparency within the job description is important (Doherty, 2020). In a competitive job market and amid ongoing concerns about teacher shortages, the clarity and completeness of job postings, especially the inclusion of realistic job previews, can influence both applicants' interest and long-term retention (Hornick-Lockard, 2021). For early-career teachers, job advertisements often serve as a first impression of program expectations, workload, and support. The purpose of this study was to describe summer job advertisements for SBAE positions in [state]. The research contributes to the broader discussion of teacher retention, job satisfaction, and the impact of clear job expectations on long-term workforce sustainability.

Conceptual Framework

This research applies content analysis methodology within teacher recruitment theory. Teacher recruitment theory highlights the importance of transparency in attracting and retaining qualified educators, emphasizing that clear job descriptions improve teacher preparedness and reduce burnout (Doherty, 2020). Clear and comprehensive job descriptions can increase applicants' sense of preparedness, reduce the likelihood of role ambiguity, and help align expectations between employers and new teachers (Klassen et al., 2021). Beyond this, literature shows financial incentives, bonuses, stipends, and loan forgiveness can help to recruit and retain teachers (Ingersoll, 2003). In this context, content analysis allowed researchers to identify common features within job postings, and descriptive statistics (Fraenkel et al., 2012).

Methodology

To analyze the data, each posting (Cal Ag Ed, n.d.) was copied into an Excel spreadsheet, and for each criterion, a column was created and coded (0 = not included, and 1 = included). To be considered included, the posting had to specifically make a statement about the criteria. Trustworthiness was established through intercoder reliability, and, given the small sample size, all items were coded by two coders independently. Intercoder reliability, using Gwet's (2014) agreeability coefficient, was considered "good" to "substantial" (Wongpakaran et al., 2013) with all categories reaching adequate and acceptable levels of reliability (0.61 to 0.84). Coding disagreements were negotiated and revised for the sake of analysis. A quantitative content analysis (Creswell & Cresswell, 2017) was conducted to describe the SBAE job advertisements for [state] from June to July 2024. The spreadsheet is publicly available and is maintained by State Staff (Current [state] AgEd Job Openings, n.d.). A total of 29 job advertisements for secondary positions were posted in the timeframe. Codes were identified a priori based on the review of literature. Through coding, additional codes were added to best describe positions. Codes and descriptive statistics are described in the Results/Findings.

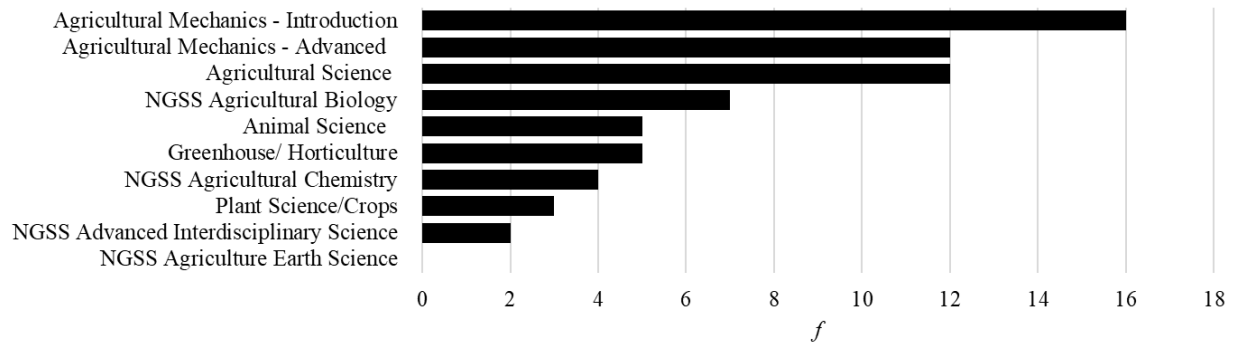
Results/Findings

Posting word count ranged from 17 to 328 words ($M = 89$, $SD = 78$). All advertisements were for high schools, of which one was an alternative education program. A total of 31% of the listings specified a fall start date. Posts indicated that 90 % of districts were using EdJoin for applications, 3% were using Frontline; and were not listed. Regarding financial compensation, 7% included hiring bonuses; only one (3.5%) specified an amount. Extended contracts were

advertised in 31% of the postings, a third of those included extended contract amounts. Of the six postings (21%) that mentioned stipends, 7% stated the amount. Of the advertisements that stated specific courses to teach, teaching assignments varied widely, as shown in Figure 1. SAE periods were advertised in 31% of the postings. Most listings stated the courses included Agricultural Mechanics, followed by Agricultural Sciences. Advertisements including 1 or more Next Generation Science Standard (NGSS) aligned course represented 24% of the total job postings.

Figure 1

Frequency of Specific Course Teaching Assignments Stated in Job Advertisements



Conclusion

The findings of this study highlight that job advertisements varied widely in their structure and content and may not well align with Doherty's (2020) guidance on transparency. While some job postings did include incentives such as extended contracts and stipends, it was a small percentage, which does not well align with Ingersoll's (2003) suggestions around highlighting financial incentives such as signing bonuses. In relation to teaching assignments, researchers found, while many advertisements stated specific courses, there was a lack of specificity related to the level of courses to be taught when Agricultural Mechanics was included, which does not promote the transparency encouraged by Doherty (2020). Another finding is that the applications are posted primarily on a single website.

Implications/Recommendations/Impact

Findings of this study should be generalized with caution, as the sample only represents summer job postings for a specific state. Practitioners including SBAE job seekers, those posting positions, and teacher educators should make several considerations. First, following Ingersoll's (2003) recommendation, consideration should be given to stating specific financial incentive values. Additionally, according to the guidance from Sorensen et al. (2016) and Doherty (2020), advertisements should discuss opportunities for professional growth and should provide transparency in the position. Second, given that jobs are almost exclusively applied on the EdJoin website, teacher educators should ensure that their preservice teachers are creating quality profiles and know how to search and apply for positions as part of their program. Researchers might explore several ideas based on the findings. First, how can hiring personnel be better educated about the responsibilities of agricultural education roles so that they may better describe them in job announcements? Second, how can agricultural teacher associations or university programs help educate hiring officials?

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