

# Happy Spouse, Happy Greenhouse: Perceptions of the SBAE Teacher's Spouse Regarding Agricultural Education as a Career

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## Abstract

*The national shortage of qualified school-based agricultural education (SBAE) teachers is concerning because it can widen the existing gap of skilled workers in the agricultural field and those trained and motivated to tackle the world's complex challenges. Utilizing the family-relatedness of work decisions theory and role conflict theory, this national study sought to explore a spouse's attitudes, work-family conflict, and satisfaction towards SBAE as a career. Our findings show households (spouses together) spend over 90 hours at work each week, with spouses of SBAE teachers reporting high work-interference with family (WIF) and relatively high satisfaction with SBAE as a career. Over one third of the spouses reported having "a lot" or a "great deal" of influence on the career-decisions of their spouse. Participants (spouses of SBAE teachers) most enjoyed the career of their SBAE teacher spouse because of the satisfaction with the career and support received from other teachers. Participants reported not liking SBAE because of excessive work for no compensation and poor salary. The total household weekly hours, WIF, and family-supportive work culture were significant predictors of a spouse's satisfaction, while gender, participation in agriculture education and family interference with work (FIW) were not. Future research exploring other predictors of spouse's satisfaction with agricultural education as a career is warranted.*

**Keywords:** career decision; family interference with work; satisfaction; spouse; work-family conflict; work-interference with family

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## Introduction and Need for the Study

In recent years, considerable attention has been devoted to the failure of American schools to be adequately staffed with qualified teachers (Aragon, 2016). Due to the increase of student enrollment and the increase of teachers leaving the teaching profession for retirements and career changes, the predicament of teacher shortage is one that affects the entire country (Gonzales et al., 2008). The nation's teacher shortage crisis extends across multiple disciplines, including school based agricultural

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education (SBAE), in which the problem has existed for more than 50 years (Kantrovich, 2010; Smith et al., 2018).

The shortage of qualified SBAE teachers is spurring program closures and an onslaught of hiring emergency or alternatively licensed teachers to keep programs alive (Smith et al., 2018). The cost of the teacher shortage and teacher turnover impacts schools and school systems in a variety of ways, including academic costs from reduced student achievement (Elfers et al., 2006; Johnson et al., 2005) and direct financial costs (Barnes et al., 2007; Flynt & Morton 2009; Gonzalez et al., 2008; Johnson et al., 2005) associated with a supply shortage of qualified teachers to fill vacancies.

Better recruitment and retention efforts are two potential solutions for solving the teacher shortage problem in agriculture education. Gonzalez et al. (2008) stated “Much attention has been brought to the issue of our nation’s teacher shortage, but what must be addressed and examined is the retention issue” (p. 2). While both recruitment and retention are important, we chose to focus this study on retention.

Solving the teacher shortage in agricultural education is imperative to meet the scientific and professional agricultural workforce demands of this century. A primary goal of SBAE is to prepare students for careers in agriculture, food, and natural resources (AFNR) areas (Phipps et al., 2008). The lack of SBAE teachers and programs may result in fewer students who are prepared to seek careers in AFNR areas and could widen the agricultural literacy gap in society. To exacerbate the problem, there already exists a shortage of skilled workers in the agricultural field (Goecker et al., 2015). Priority area three of the 2015-2020 National Research Agenda of the American Association for Agricultural Education places emphasis on attracting and developing the next generation of agricultural scientists (Stripling & Ricketts, 2016).

The most recent estimates of the global population are projected to increase 10 percent by 2030 to 8.5 billion with populations expected to reach 9.7 billion people in 2050 (United Nations, 2019). This global population growth will place greater demands on a skilled agricultural workforce tasked with addressing the world’s complex challenges such as improving agricultural productivity to meet increasing demands and ensuring a sustainable natural resource base (Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations [FAO], 2017). As a result, agriculture is at the forefront of issues related to population growth as it strives to provide nutritious food for the growing population while also preserving natural resources. Addressing complex global issues facing society is a clear priority area for agriculture and natural resource professionals across many disciplines (National Institute of Food and Agriculture [NIFA], 2019) including SBAE (Roberts et al., 2016; Spielmaker & Leising, 2013). Therefore, the shortage of trained SBAE teachers is of great concern when addressed in this context, as SBAE should be the beginning of the pipeline for training and motivating students to address these complex agricultural issues resulting from world population growth.

One approach to maintaining the pipeline of SBAE teachers is a concerted effort to retain those currently in the classroom by removing factors that contribute to their turnover decision or emphasizing factors that increase job satisfaction. For example, Tippens et al., (2013) developed a model from a synthesis of agricultural education literature summarizing the primary factors associated with SBAE teacher satisfaction. These factors included; a) family and personal factors (e.g. other job opportunities, children and family responsibilities), b) compensation (e.g. salary), c) employment factors (e.g. teacher experience), and d) working conditions. The factors proposed by Tippens et al. (2013) can be reduced to work (e.g., compensation, employment factors, and working conditions) and non-work influences (family and personal factors). While a fair amount of literature exists in agricultural education focusing on the non-work factors related to teacher turnover and satisfaction (e.g., Crutchfield et al., 2013; Hainline et al., 2015; Murray et al., 2011; Sorensen & McKim 2014; Sorensen et al., 2017; Sorensen et

al., 2016a; Sorensen et al., 2016b), no studies have assessed the influence of the spouse or partner on career decisions of the SBAE teacher. This study sought to do so.

The impetus for examining the influence of the spouse or partner (hereafter referred to as spouse) on career decisions of the SBAE teacher is rooted in the idea that individuals do not make career decisions independently, but are influenced by attitudes and beliefs of others, such as members of his or her family unit (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012; Hall, 1987). A spouse can have an important influence on a teacher's decision to remain in the profession or to leave (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012; Huffman et al., 2014). Studies suggest that a spouse's attitude towards a worker's employer is related to that worker's overall commitment to his or her organization (Huffman et al., 2014; Wayne et al., 2013).

### **Theoretical Framework**

American society has changed in recent decades with many more dual-earner couples (Galinsky et al., 2011). As a result, models explaining career decision making that acknowledge the important role of non-work factors have also been adapted (Huffman et al., 2014). Non-work factors act to influence career-decision making as independent non-work variables (e.g., spouse support) and as cross-domain (e.g., work-family conflict) variables (Huffman et al., 2014). Two interconnected theories were used as the framework for this study capturing both the independent non-work variables and cross-domain variables, which include the family-relatedness of work decisions framework (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012) and the role conflict theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

#### **Family-Relatedness of Work Decisions (FRWD) Framework**

Based on the idea that individuals in the workplace often strive to meet their own expectations but also those of others (Zacher, 2014), the FRWD is used as a framework (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012) for this study. The FRWD suggests people often consider the home situation and the most positive outcomes for a couple or family when making career decisions. For example, the decision to take a break from one's career to raise children is strongly influenced by a spouse's expectations regarding gender roles and child rearing (Higgins et al., 1994). The spouse is one of the major influential factors that shape one's career decision-making (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012). A spouse often holds strong views about the employee's working life and wishes him or her to change, continue, or pursue certain careers (Pluut et al., 2018). In some instances, the spouse holds high career aspirations and can influence the career decision-making process by encouraging the employee to engage in activities that will result in career success (Pluut et al., 2018). In this positive way of thinking, spouses are able to influence an employee's work identity (Masterson & Hoobler, 2015). Operationalized, this theory provides context for the spouse as a non-work influencer within SBAE. For example, according to the FRWD, when SBAE teachers decide to spend extra hours at work, this can be interpreted as the employee being a good financial provider and being committed to the family (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012).

#### **Role Conflict Theory and Work-Family Conflict (WFC)**

Contrary to the FRWD's positive and compatible perspective, the role-conflict theory positions the work and family domains as distinct and conflicting because available time and energy resources are limited (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Participation in multiple life roles (e.g., work and family) therefore results in the resources of time and energy being depleted (Marks, 1977). The addition of demands in one or more roles, increases strain in both life roles because of the limited amount of resources (time and energy) shared by competing roles (Greenhaus & Parasuraman, 1986). The role conflict theory also suggests as the number of work hours increase by an employee, so does conflict between work and family roles (Duxbury et al., 1994). According to this view, the more time an

individual spends participating in work-related activities, the more they experience their work interfering with family obligations, thus creating conflict (Wharton & Blair-Loy, 2006). Accordingly, many work-related decisions can influence the available resources (e.g., time, energy) that can be committed to the home domain (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). The spouse's views, and consequently work-related decisions, are therefore often shaped by role conflict, the conflict that arises as a result of trying to manage work and family roles (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985).

Although the role conflict theory reaches extensively across multiple life roles and domains, work and family domains have received most of the attention in research (Eby et al., 2005; Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985). Research examining how individuals navigate responsibilities between work and family domains has yielded a construct central to the role conflict theory known as work-family conflict (WFC). Research has identified WFC as a bi-directional construct that takes the form of work interference with family (WIF; when work demands interfere with fulfilling family obligations) or family interference with work (FIW; when family demands interfere with fulfilling work obligations) (Frone et al., 1992; Gutek et al., 1991). One unique characteristic of the WFC construct is the bi-directional crossover effects between partners, so as WFC increases for one partner, it has been found to also increase in the other (Barnett et al., 1995; Westman et al., 2001). Many antecedents of WFC have been identified in the work-family literature including role salience (Cinamon & Rich, 2002; Noor, 2004), gender and gender roles (Byron, 2005; Morgan, 2014), number and age of dependents (Grandey & Cropanzano, 1999), level of family-support provided at the workplace (Booth & Matthews, 2012; Kossek et al., 2011), and work factors, such as job stressors, work overload, and time spent at work, (Mesmer-Magnus & Viswesvaran, 2005). The negative consequences of WFC include low occupational well-being, poor work performance, low organizational commitment, job dissatisfaction, increased job stress, burnout, high intentions to quit, and actual turnover (Allen et al., 2000; Bruck et al., 2002; Carlson et al., 2000).

Operationalizing the role conflict theory and the FRWD, a spouse's satisfaction of the SBAE teacher's job can influence career decisions of the teacher. Furthermore, the spouse's satisfaction can be influenced by a number of antecedent factors including, 1) cross-domain variables (e.g., WFC, family-supported work culture), 2) sociocultural factors (e.g., gender and spouse's previous experience), and 3) household work hours. This study sought to describe and explain the antecedents of a spouse's satisfaction towards SBAE teaching as a career.

## **Literature Review**

### **Job Satisfaction**

Research both within agricultural education and outside of agricultural education has suggested a positive relationship between job satisfaction and career commitment (e.g., Anari, 2012; Chapman, 1984; Grissom et al., 2012; Sorensen & McKim, 2014; Walker et al., 2004). Much of the research (e.g., Chenevey et al., 2008; Kitchel et al., 2012; Ritz et al., 2013; Walker et al., 2004) has indicated SBAE teachers are generally satisfied with their careers, despite the additional responsibilities and often disproportionate work hours identified in the literature. While there is ample literature in agricultural education describing job satisfaction of SBAE teachers, there is little that addresses the spouse's level of satisfaction with SBAE. One known study (Odell et al., 1990) concluded family factors including satisfaction of the spouse, had a significant influence on the job satisfaction of SBAE teachers. This study seems to suggest a spouse's satisfaction may in fact influence SBAE teachers' own career satisfaction and career decision-making.

### **Cross-Domain Variables: WFC and Family-Supported Work Culture**

Research in agricultural education has indicated teachers struggle to balance work and family roles and report significant levels of WFC (Murray et al., 2011; Sorensen & McKim, 2014; Sorensen et al., 2016b, Sorensen, et al., 2017). Barriers to satisfying family responsibilities of SBAE teachers are extended workdays, meetings or activities outside school day hours and fatigue (Murray et al., 2011). Additionally, teachers who take on added responsibilities outside typical classroom instruction are more apt to leave the profession early (Crutchfield et al., 2013).

Agricultural education is a unique and arduous profession (Torres et al., 2008) with teachers on average devoting much more than 40 hours per week to their jobs (Hainline et al., 2015; Murray et al., 2011; Sorensen et al., 2017). The surfeit of weekly work hours is generally attributed to the extra responsibilities of advising the local FFA chapter or fostering school and community partnerships for example (Torres et al., 2008). These additional responsibilities increase the amount of time SBAE teachers engage in the work domain, thus reducing the time available in other life roles, contributing to work-family conflict, job satisfaction, and turnover intentions (Sorensen et al., 2017; Sorensen et al., 2016a).

Scholars have examined the role of workplace culture in relation to job satisfaction and the work-family interface (Pedersen & Minnotte, 2012; Seiger & Wiese, 2009; Wharton et al., 2008). Research shows family-supportive organizations tend to increase job satisfaction and decrease WFC (Allen et al., 2000; Grandey et al., 2005; Kossek et al., 2011). In agricultural education, a perceived family-supportive work culture has been found to be a significant but negative predictor of WFC and turnover intentions (Sorensen et al., 2016b).

### **Sociocultural Norms and Roles**

Due to sociocultural norms, gender and gender roles may be an important factor influencing a spouse's job satisfaction in a variety of careers (Cleveland et al., 2015; Huffman et al., 2014). Modern society has witnessed a steady increase in dual-earner families, and as a result, men and women have redefined their family roles in ways that do not necessarily fit the traditional homemaker-breadwinner roles (Galinsky et al., 2011). Despite these workplace trends, gender and gender roles may still influence attitudes and career decisions of couples (Galinsky et al., 2011). For example, in agricultural education, Murray et al. (2011) found traditional gender roles may still exist among SBAE teachers, increasing stress among women SBAE teachers who also have families. One study outside of agricultural education has shown women were more likely to sacrifice career opportunities abroad for their husband's career aspirations and job satisfaction (Ullrich et al., 2015).

Consumer research has shown the important relationship between familiarity with products and consumer satisfaction (Ha & Perks, 2005). This relationship transcends consumer products and holds true for the relationship between job satisfaction and familiarity with certain aspects of the job (Clark, 2007). Motivational theories, such as social cognitive theory (Bandura, 1999) also suggest the importance of past experiences in shaping attitudes and behaviors of individuals. This evidence might suggest spouses of SBAE teachers with previous experiences in SBAE could have more positive attitudes towards SBAE as a career. This study seeks to answer that question.

### **Purpose/Objectives**

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain the antecedents of a spouse's satisfaction towards SBAE teaching as a career. This research aligns with the National Research Agenda Priority three which calls for research into a "sufficient scientific and professional workforce" (Roberts et al.,

2016, p. 9). As SBAE teacher retention increases, the ability to adequately train a sufficient scientific and professional workforce can be realized. The following research objectives guided the study:

1. Describe the demographic characteristics of the spouse of SBAE teachers.
2. Describe cross-domain variables (work-family conflict and perceived family-supportive work culture) of the spouse of SBAE teachers.
3. Describe the satisfaction of the spouse regarding SBAE teaching as a career.
4. Explain the relationship between the spouse's satisfaction with SBAE teaching as a career and key demographic characteristics, work-family conflict, and family-supportive work culture.

### Methods/Procedures

The population for this study consisted of spouses of SBAE teachers in the United States during the 2018-2019 school year. According to the National FFA Organization, there were approximately 12,000 SBAE teachers when this study was conducted (National FFA, 2019). A sample of the teachers was chosen as opposed to a census because of the large size of the population and the limitations imposed on obtaining an accurate population frame for distributing the survey. The appropriate sample size was determined based on Cochran's (1977) and Krejcie and Morgan's (1970) sample size determinant formulas with a 3% margin of error. Based on Cochran's (1977) sample size formula, the sample size required for this study was at least 371 for generalizability because dichotomous and categorical data were utilized. To account for non-response, we doubled the target sample size hoping to achieve enough respondents to generalize the findings nationally (Roberts & Allen, 2015). Therefore, this study first targeted a simple random sample ( $n = 739$ ; 6.16% of total population) from the entire population of SBAE teachers in the United States. The sample was obtained from the National FFA Organization and consisted only of names and email addresses. It is unknown how many SBAE teachers had spouses at the time of the study as the primary step in sampling was to target the accessible population of SBAE teachers in order to obtain a sample frame of SBAE teacher spouses. A Qualtrics survey was distributed to the SBAE teachers with one item asking them to provide an email for their spouse. In total, five emails with reminders were sent in an effort to increase the response rate (Dillman et al., 2014). Each email produced a jump in responses. IRB limitations prohibited us from sending more than five emails. A total of 175 SBAE teachers (23.68% response) responded to the original survey distribution, providing us with the new target frame we desired, but less than what was needed to generalize the findings. The instrument was then sent to all of the emails provided by the SBAE teachers. Five emails with reminders were sent in an effort to increase the response rate. A large number of responses were obtained from the first two emails ( $n = 91$ ), while the final three emails produced minimal results ( $n = 19$ ). A total of 110 usable surveys were collected, which is assumed to represent at least 14.88% of the spouses of SBAE teachers in the nation. The low response rate is a limitation to this study. Although the results may not be generalizable beyond this sample, we believe the findings can be valuable to readers and stakeholders, especially in light of the fact that no study like this exists in the agricultural education literature.

We considered the potential for non-response bias. Because the National FFA Organization or the SBAE teachers did not provide us with phone records of the SBAE teachers or spouse, we were unable to make follow-up phone calls to non-responders. Therefore, we followed the recommendations outlined by Lindner et al. (2001) and compared the early responders (first survey distribution,  $n = 72$ ) to the late responders ( $n = 38$ ) using an independent samples t-test for variables of interest (i.e., WFC, total household work hours, family-supported work culture, and satisfaction). The independent samples t-tests indicated none of the variables significantly differed between early and late responders indicating non-response bias was not an issue.

## Instrumentation

The survey instrument was developed and organized based on the research objectives of the study. Demographic information was located at the end of the survey. We measured demographic characteristics (objective 1) by asking participants their gender, number of weekly work hours, number of weekly work hours of their spouse, if they participated in SBAE while in school, level of knowledge about SBAE before meeting their spouse, and how much influence they perceived to have on the career decisions of their spouse (SBAE teacher). Gender and participation in SBAE were dichotomous variables while number of weekly work hours of the participant and number of weekly work hours of the SBAE teacher were continuous variables. Participation in SBAE while in school was measured by asking participants, "Did you take any agriculture classes or participate in the FFA when you were in high school?" with "yes" or "no" as the response options. The number of weekly work hours was measured by asking, "On average, how many hours per week do you work outside of the home?" and, "On average, how many hours per week does your spouse/partner work doing agriculture teaching responsibilities?" The weekly work hours of the SBAE teacher and the spouse were combined to create a new variable for analysis (i.e., total household weekly work hours). To measure the degree of influence on career decision making we asked the participants, "What degree of influence do you have regarding the career-decisions of your spouse/partner?" with five categorical response options ranging from "none at all" to "a great deal." Finally, we asked participants their level of knowledge about SBAE before meeting their spouse by asking them, "Before meeting your spouse/partner, how much did you know about the job of an agriculture teacher?"

For objective two, we measured three different constructs (i.e., work-interference with family [WIF], family-interference with work [FIW], and perceived family-supportive work culture). WIF and FIW were measured using the six-item subscale of the work-family conflict scale ([WFCS] Carlson et al., 2000) with modifications for the spouse. The WFCS as designed by Carlson et al. (2000) is divided up into three subscales for each of the two conflict scales (WIF and FIW), which assess time-based conflict, strain-based conflict, and behavior-based conflict. This study focused on time-based conflict, so only the six-item measure (three items for WIF and three items for FIW) of time-based conflict was utilized. Participants rated each item on a six-point scale (from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*), with higher scores indicating greater conflict. Sample items for the WIF construct included "My spouse/partner's work keeps him/her from family activities more than I would like" and "My spouse/partner has to miss family activities due to the amount of time he/she must spend on work responsibilities." Sample items for the FIW construct included "The time my spouse/partner spends on family responsibilities often interferes with his/her work responsibilities" and "The time my spouse/partner spends with my family often causes him/her not to spend time in activities at work that could be helpful to his/her career." The WFCS has been used extensively in research and has been found to be reliable and valid (Bruck et al., 2002; Carlson et al., 2000; Viera, et al., 2013). Carlson et al. (2000) reported internal consistency reliabilities for each subscale ranged from .76 to .89. Furthermore, the bi-directional nature of WFC (Barnett et al., 1995; Westman et al., 2001) has enabled this scale to be an effective and reliable measure for perceptions of both partners when measuring the working spouse's WFC (Matsch et al., 2009). As WFC measures perceptions of spillover effects in both work and family domains, the spouse's perception of his or her working partner's WFC can be useful.

Perceived family-supportive work culture was measured using items from the manager and co-worker support and family-supportive culture section of the Harrington et al., (2011) study, and adapted for purposes of this research. Participants rated each of the six items on a six-point scale (from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*), with higher scores indicating a more family-supportive work culture. Sample items included "The administration of my spouse/partner really cares about the effect

that work demands have on his/her personal life,” and “The school and district policies where my spouse/partner works support teachers that have family obligations.”

For objective three, we measured spouse’s satisfaction with SBAE teaching as a career utilizing the job satisfaction scale developed by Judge et al. (2000) and adapted for this study. Participants rated each of the four items on a six-point scale (from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*), with higher scores indicating higher satisfaction with SBAE as a career. Sample items included, “I feel satisfied with the present job of my spouse/partner” and “If I could do it all over again, I would most definitely encourage my spouse/partner to choose a different career” (reverse coded). In addition to the job satisfaction scale, we also asked participants what specifically they liked or disliked about SBAE teaching as a career. We provided a list of possible likes and dislikes and asked participants to rate each item on a six-point scale (from 1 = *strongly disagree* to 6 = *strongly agree*). For likes, the participants were asked, “I like the career of my spouse/partner because...” followed by twelve researcher-developed statements. Sample statements included, “He/she gets weekend and holidays off” and “It pays well.” For dislikes, participants were asked, “I dislike the career of my spouse/partner because...” followed by twelve researcher-developed statements. Sample statements included, “Of the excessive work hours” and “He/she brings work home.”

We conducted a pilot study with 30 SBAE teachers in Utah in order to determine construct reliability (see Table 1). Using the established minimum reliability level of .70 (Nunnally & Bernstein, 1994), results from the pilot test indicated the constructs of interest were reliable (WIF, FIW, family-supported work culture, satisfaction with SBAE teaching as a career). Face and content validity for the instrument were evaluated by a panel of experts at Utah State University, which included professors and graduate students in fields of Education and found to be sufficiently valid.

**Table 1**  
*Pilot Reliability Estimates of Constructs*

Construct	No. of Items	Pilot $\alpha$
Satisfaction with SBAE as a Career	4	.87
Work-Interference with Family (WIF)	3	.94
Family-Interference with Work (FIW)	3	.87
Family-Supportive Work Culture	5	.71

*Note.* Pilot  $\alpha$  refers to reliability and is a Cronbach’s alpha estimate.

### Data Analysis

Results for objective one were analyzed and reported using frequencies, percentages, means and standard deviations where appropriate. Results for objectives two and three were descriptive in nature and were analyzed and reported using means and standard deviations. Research objective four was analyzed using an ordinary least squares (OLS) multiple linear regression (Field, 2013) with a spouse’s satisfaction as the dependent variable and the WIF, FIW, family-supportive work culture, gender, household weekly work hours, and spouse’s participation in SBAE as the independent variables. According to Green (1991), to ensure stability and sufficient power when testing a model, a minimum sample size of  $50 + 8k$  is recommended (where  $k$  is the number of predictors). With six variables entered, the minimum acceptable sample size was 98. Therefore, our sample of 110 cases was sufficient. Assumptions of regression (i.e., linearity, homoscedasticity, independence, normality) were assessed before conducting the analysis (Field, 2013). Betas, standardized betas, and overall  $R^2$  were calculated and reported for each of the two regression analyses performed (Field, 2013).

## Results/Findings

Research objective one sought to describe the demographic characteristics of the spouse of the SBAE teacher. Participant ages ranged from 22 to 61 years old with a mean age of 38.76 ( $SD = 10.38$ ). The majority of the spouses were female ( $n = 65$ ; 59%) and worked outside of the home ( $n = 98$ ; 89%) with weekly employment hours totaling 41.17 ( $SD = 8.19$ ). When combined with the workhours of the SBAE teacher spouse, total household work hours were 91.54 ( $SD = 23.45$ ). Among the respondents, 71% ( $n = 79$ ) reported having at least one child. The number of children of the participants who indicated having children ranged from one to six with a mean of 1.84 ( $SD = 0.56$ ). Thirty-five percent (35%,  $n = 39$ ) of the participants believed they had “a lot” or a “great deal” of influence regarding the career-decisions of their spouse. Of the participants, 71% ( $n = 79$ ) had never participated in SBAE, and more than half ( $n = 62$ ; 56%) knew nothing at all or only a little bit about SBAE prior to meeting their spouse.

Research objective two sought to describe perceptions of the work-family interface of the spouse of SBAE teachers. Constructs of interest were work-interference with family (WIF), family-interference with work (FIW), and perceived family-supportive work culture. Most of the participants in this study somewhat agreed that they perceived their SBAE teacher spouses experienced WIF but most disagreed that the spouse experienced FIW (see Table 2). Participants only somewhat agreed the culture of SBAE was a family-supportive one.

**Table 2**

*Spouse's Work-Family Cross-Domain Variables and Satisfaction with SBAE*

Constructs	Mean	SD
Satisfaction with SBAE as a career	4.46	1.14
Work interference with family (WIF)	4.24	1.19
Family-supportive work culture	3.87	0.88
Family interference with work (FIW)	2.04	0.70

*Note.* WIF, FIW, family-supportive work culture, and satisfaction with SBAE as a career were measured on a 6-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Real limits: 1.0-1.49 = strongly disagree; 1.50-2.49 = disagree; 2.50-3.49 = somewhat disagree; 3.50-4.49 = somewhat agree; 4.50-5.49 = agree; 5.50-6.00 = strongly agree.

Objective three of this study sought to describe the satisfaction of the spouse regarding agricultural education as a career. Overall, participants somewhat agreed with being satisfied with their spouse's career as an SBAE teacher (see Table 2). Participants were also asked to rate their level of agreement regarding what they liked (see Table 3) and disliked (see Table 4) about agricultural education as a career. Participants liked the career of their SBAE teacher spouse mostly because, 1) their spouse (e.g., SBAE teacher) was satisfied with their job, 2) the support from other SBAE teachers, 3) the great students, 4) the many opportunities it provides him/her, and 5) he/she gets weekends off. Participants disliked the career of their SBAE teacher spouse mostly because, 1) the lack of compensation for the amount of work contributed, 2) the excessive work hours, 3) he/she brings work home, 4) poor salary, and 5) lack of opportunity to move up in his/her career.

**Table 3***Characteristics Participants Like about SBAE Teaching as a Career*

I like the career of my spouse/partner because...	Mean	SD
My spouse is satisfied with their job	4.72	1.17
Of the support from other agriculture teachers	4.70	.98
Of the great students	4.32	1.15
Of the many opportunities it provides for him/her	4.26	1.24
He/she gets weekend and holidays off	4.04	1.62
It is a great working environment	4.00	1.25
It is compatible with raising a family	3.67	1.34
Of the good benefit package it offers	3.54	1.53
It pays well	3.22	1.45
The hours are good	3.10	1.38
Of the opportunity to move up in his/her career	3.03	1.35
Of the frequent salary increase	2.51	1.42

*Note.* Items were measured on a 6-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Real limits: 1.0-1.49 = strongly disagree; 1.50-2.49 = disagree; 2.50-3.49 = somewhat disagree; 3.50-4.49 = somewhat agree; 4.50-5.49 = agree; 5.50-6.00 = strongly agree.

**Table 4***Characteristics Participants Dislike about SBAE Teaching as a Career*

I dislike the career of my spouse/partner because...	Mean	SD
Of the lack of compensation for the amount of work contributed	4.58	1.21
Of the excessive work hours	4.37	1.43
He/she brings work home	3.93	1.49
Poor salary	3.79	1.40
Of the lack of opportunity to move up in his/her career	3.79	1.38
Poor administration	3.19	1.35
It is not compatible with raising a family	3.18	1.41
Of the poor benefit package	3.17	1.50
Of the poor work environment	2.49	1.05
I feel my spouse/partner is better suited in another line of work	2.37	1.28
My spouse/partner is not satisfied with his/her job	2.29	1.18
Unsafe working conditions	1.90	.95

*Note.* Items were measured on a 6-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Real limits: 1.0-1.49 = strongly disagree; 1.50-2.49 = disagree; 2.50-3.49 = somewhat disagree; 3.50-4.49 = somewhat agree; 4.50-5.49 = agree; 5.50-6.00 = strongly agree.

For research objective four, an OLS multiple linear regression was conducted. The dependent variable was the spouse's satisfaction with SBAE as a career while the independent variables were total household weekly work hours, previous participation in SBAE, WIF, FIW, and family-supportive work culture. The independent variables comprised a significant model ( $F = 9.03$ ;  $p < .001$ ) and predicted 33% ( $R^2 = .33$ ) of the variance in spouse's satisfaction with SBAE as a career (see Table 5). Three variables were found to be significant ( $p < .05$ ) predictors in the model, which included family-supportive work culture ( $\beta = .42$ ;  $p < .001$ ), WIF ( $\beta = -.32$ ;  $p = .003$ ), and total household weekly

work hours ( $\beta = .26$ ;  $p = .005$ ). Gender, previous participation in SBAE, and FIW were statistically insignificant predictors in the model.

**Table 5**

*Predictive Model of Spouse's Satisfaction with SBAE as a Career*

Variable	Dependent Variable: Spouse's Satisfaction with SBAE			
	<i>B</i>	<i>SEB</i>	$\beta$	<i>p</i> -value
Gender	.19	.22	.08	.390
Total household weekly work hours	.01	.01	.26	.005
Participation in SBAE	.08	.25	.03	.754
WIF	-.31	.10	-.32	.003
FIW	-.12	.14	-.07	.426
Family-supportive work culture	.54	.13	.42	.000

*Note.*  $R = .61$ , Adjusted  $R^2 = .33$ ,  $F = 9.03$ ,  $p < .001$ . WIF, FIW, and family-supportive work culture were measured on a 6-point scale from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 6 (*strongly agree*). Gender coded 0 = female, 1 = male. Participation in SBAE coded 0 = yes, 1 = no.

### Conclusions and Discussion

The purpose of this study was to describe and explain the antecedents of a spouse's satisfaction towards SBAE teaching as a career. We first acknowledge the limitations which exist with this study. The low response rate obtained from both SBAE teachers and their spouses puts generalizability in question, and we therefore caution readers in extending the findings beyond the participants of this study. Furthermore, the challenge of accessing an abstract population of SBAE teachers' spouses has its limitations (e.g., response rate). Despite these two limitations, we argue the findings of this study can be insightful and beneficial for stakeholders within SBAE and can be a starting point for future research and related activities.

The first research objective provided insight into the demographic characteristics, specifically family domain characteristics, of the spouse of the SBAE teacher. With over one-third of spouses reporting they have "a lot" or a "great deal" of influence regarding the career decisions of their spouse, this finding helps explain the theory of family-relatedness of work decisions (Greenhaus & Powell, 2012) and the context of the spouse as a career influencer. In light of the critical teacher shortage crisis in agricultural education and the need for retention, it is encouraging to note that with 35% of the spouses indicating a "a lot" or a "great deal" of influence on the career decision-making of the SBAE teacher, the spouses on average indicated being moderately satisfied with SBAE as a career.

What spouses most liked about SBAE teaching as a career was their SBAE teacher spouse was satisfied with their job. This supports the findings from Odell et al., (1990) where family satisfaction and job satisfaction were found to be significantly correlated. The role conflict theory describes spillover in a negative context (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), yet this could be an example of positive spillover from job satisfaction in the workplace to family satisfaction.

Participants also indicated liking agricultural education as a career because of the schedule, enabling their spouse to be free from work on weekends and holidays. Yet, they also disliked that their spouse brings work home and often works too many hours. This is an interesting paradox that seems to explain some of the challenges associated with teaching agriculture, especially in a dual-income household. With total household work hours exceeding 90 hours per week, it is reasonable to suggest weekends and holidays are valued, at least to the spouses in this study, because of the time when couples and families are most able to spend time together. Yet, it seems negative spillover from work to the

home domain on weekends and holidays might be a common occurrence. Perhaps this is because of the unique responsibilities of SBAE teachers, with projects such as livestock or greenhouse crops that require weekend tending by SBAE teachers. It could also be a function of more typical teaching duties such as curriculum planning or grading that because of excessive workhours during the week are put off until weekends (Hainline et al., 2015; Sorensen et al., 2017).

This study's findings seem to align with others outside of agricultural education (e.g., Greenhaus & Powell, 2012; Pluut et al., 2018) showing the influence spouses have on career decisions. This study also illuminated some of the frustrations and dislikes spouses have regarding agricultural education. While participants in this study overall indicated they were satisfied with agricultural education as a career for their SBAE spouse, they did indicate disliking it for reasons mostly related to excessive work hours and lack of compensation. This finding mirrors what SBAE teachers have also indicated as factors related to dissatisfaction, WFC, or turnover intentions (Crutchfield et al., 2013; Murray et al., 2011; Sorensen et al., 2016b). We suggest, based on these findings and those of others (e.g., Allen et al., 2000; Hainline et al., 2015; Murray et al., 2011; Sorensen et al., 2016b), that as SBAE teachers spend excessive time doing work-related activities (including bringing work home), the negative spillover influences the satisfaction of the spouse and the likelihood of influencing career change decisions.

In today's economic environment, a dual-earner income is commonplace (Galinsky et al., 2011), and this study seemed to support that notion. Nearly 90% of spouses in this study indicated working outside the home, with an average of 41 hours per week but a total average household work hours of 91 hours per week. This result, according to their spouse, suggests SBAE teachers on average work about 50 hours per week. These findings seem to align with other studies reporting SBAE teachers often work well beyond the standard 40-hour work week (Hainline et al., 2015; Murray et al., 2011; Sorensen et al., 2017). According to the role conflict theory (Greenhaus & Beutell, 1985), excessive work hours will contribute to work-family conflict (WFC), a significant predictor of the spouse's satisfaction with SBAE as a career. Our findings have shown SBAE teachers are perceived to experience relatively high WIF but low FIW from their spouses. This is consistent with research outside agricultural education (Cinamon & Rich, 2005) as well as within (Sorensen et al., 2016b); suggesting conflict originates more as a result of workplace characteristics than family characteristics. This is likely the product of the extensive work responsibilities placed on SBAE teachers (Torres et al., 2008), especially considering the top two dislikes of participants in this study related to excess work hours and lack of compensation for the amount of work. Most concerning is WIF was a negative but statistically significant predictor of spouse's satisfaction with SBAE as a career. As WIF rises, spouse's satisfaction with SBAE diminishes. With the spouse's influence on career decision-making, WIF of the SBAE teacher or the spouse of the SBAE teacher can therefore lead to SBAE teacher turnover (Sorensen et al., 2016b).

While total household weekly hours, WIF, and family-supported work culture were significant predictors of spouse's satisfaction with SBAE, gender, participation in SBAE, and FIW were not. These predictor variables, however, explained 33% of the variance in spouse's satisfaction with SBAE. The largest of these predictors was family-supported work culture, supporting the findings of Sorensen, et al. (2017) and highlighting the importance of creating family-friendly cultures within SBAE. Similar to other studies in agricultural education, gender does not seem to be a significant predictor of satisfaction with SBAE (Sorensen et al., 2016a; Sorensen & McKim, 2014).

### **Recommendations for Research and Practice**

Despite the low response rate and limited national analysis, we believe this research has been an important step in understanding the attitudes of the spouse regarding SBAE teaching as a career as

well as their role in career decision making and we recommend more research to build on our work. Specifically, we recommend future research to determine additional factors related to a spouse's satisfaction with SBAE and career decisions related to SBAE. We also suggest research be conducted among SBAE teachers who either left teaching or migrated to another school and determine the influence of the spouse or other family members in that decision. We suggest research designs so generalizability on a national scale can be achieved.

Spouses in this study reported liking SBAE because the SBAE teachers get weekends and holidays off, yet, at the same time they reported disliking it because SBAE teachers work excessive hours and bring work home in the evenings and weekends. Research should explore this paradox in more detail to explain how and what spillover occurs on weekends and holidays. Examining how SBAE teachers utilize their time when away from work, especially as it relates to family satisfaction, job satisfaction, and overall life satisfaction, might be useful.

We also suggest these findings can be important for SBAE professionals and stakeholders. Based on our findings and those of others, it is clear that SBAE teachers continue to work excessive hours which contributes to negative spillover in the family domain. Such spillover can cause spouses and other family members to develop negative attitudes towards the workplace. Because of the influence spouses have on the career-decision making process of SBAE teachers, we recommend, as other studies have done (e.g., Crutchfield et al., 2013; Murray et al., 2011; Sorensen et al., 2017), that SBAE teachers prioritize and determine ways in which they can reduce their workload. Based on the findings of this study, SBAE teachers should recognize the negative consequences on the spouse's attitude from engaging in work-related activities on weekends and in evenings when family domain activities should prevail.

We recommend state staff should try to avoid overscheduling events that would take SBAE teachers away from their spouse and family, especially on weekends and holidays. Additionally, state staff and teacher educators should consider providing training for in-service and preservice teachers pertaining to prioritization and purposefully planning for a healthy balance across multiple life domains.

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