

Insights from Second Generation Agriculture Teachers on Career Choice and Identity

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Abstract

The recruitment and retention of agriculture teachers has been a persistent problem for several decades, requiring unique approaches to solving this issue. This study sought to garner a unique prospective of why and how one enters the profession by understanding why second generation agriculture teachers (SGATs) chose to enter the profession after growing up with a parent who was an agriculture teacher. Through semi-structured interviews three themes emerged. The first theme was experiencing the profession and impact through the SGAT's father influenced SGAT's career decision. SGATs felt they were ahead of their high school peers, having learned content knowledge by growing up with their agriculture teacher parent. Second, SGAT's fathers were role models to them, and they based their own teaching and life strategies off their experiences growing up. SGATs were better able to structure their classroom and lives off both the good and bad experiences growing up with their agriculture teacher parent. Third, SGATs unconsciously inherited identity and beliefs from their fathers. We recommend continued research into the retention of teachers and to recommend teacher recruitment campaigns from students' points of view regarding teacher impact as that perspective had an impact on the SGATs.

Keywords: second generation agriculture teachers; teacher recruitment; teacher retention

Introduction and Literature Review

Recruiting and retaining teachers has been a persistent issue, signifying the need for new approaches to solve the issue (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; Hasselquist et al., 2017; Watt et al., 2012). Over the past 40 years, the number of agricultural education graduates has decreased by 55%, while the number of agricultural education positions are currently on an upward trend (Eck & Edwards, 2019; Hasselquist et al., 2017). Concurrently, teacher retention has been a continual problem in education broadly (Goldring et al., 2014; Helms-Lorenz et al., 2016; Odell & Ferraro, 1992; Smith et al., 2019). A shortage of agriculture teachers can be dated back to 1965 (Blackburn et al., 2019; Camp et al., 2002). Teacher retention is vital in creating a stable learning environment and allows more quality educators to develop in the education system (Donaldson & Johnson, 2011; Helms-Lorenz et al., 2016; Zhang & Zeller, 2016). In school-based agriculture education, a high teacher attrition rate can cause schools' programs to decrease in size or even to close altogether (Eck & Edwards, 2019). With the high cost of training new teachers, it is much more cost effective to retain teachers than to hire new teachers (Greenlee & Brown Jr., 2009; Walker et al., 2004). In response, programs such as the Teach Ag Campaign were developed nationally and within states to encourage high school students to enter the profession (Thompson, 2018). Despite the time and resources invested into this issue, the problem has continued indicating the need for alternative recruitment methods

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(Gates et al., 2020; Thompson, 2018). This study was designed to identify what motivates individuals to pursue a career in agricultural education and to help recruit more teachers into the career field.

Teachers play an important role in career development. Supportive teachers will encourage positive values in their students and begin the career development process from an early age (Metheny et al., 2008). When looking at career choice decision making, there are many factors that come into play when selecting a career path (Ferry et al., 2000; Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). Agriculture teachers play a pivotal role in guiding students toward choosing their career objectives (Marx et al., 2014; Park & Rudd, 2005). Further, teachers produce more future teachers when they display the attributes of the career in a positive manner.

Parents play a large role in allowing their children to experience various roles in the work force and gain access to critical career information (Young et al., 1991). Parents' own career path, values, and skills allow children to begin thinking early about whether they want to pursue a similar career (Wasby & Daly, 1994). Opportunities provided by families and familial social processes are two of the most influential factors for those following a parent's career footsteps (Schröder et al., 2011). Even further, *occupational inheritance*, the phenomenon where children choose the same career as their parents (Roller & Doerries, 2008), can act as a structure for a child's first vocational choice out of school (Gubler et al., 2017). Therefore, we posit there is something unique that occurs between a child and their parent as it relates to the career decision-making process. It is within that uniqueness that we should consider how children who follow their parents' career footsteps come to their career decision. Based on that line of reasoning, as it relates to the profession's recruitment problem at hand, it may be important to look at the process of career decision making of agriculture teachers whose parents were also agriculture teachers, herein referred to as *second generation agriculture teachers* (SGATs). If research indicates parents and agriculture teachers are influential on careers, then in the case of SGATs and their parents, we get both.

Recruitment as a Function of Career Decision-Making

In terms of recruitment, we framed the issue around career decision-making. Choosing a career is one of the most prevalent vocational problems amongst high school students and individuals must weigh many careers and consider numerous alternatives (Gati & Amir, 2010; Gati & Levin, 2014; Vertsberger & Gati, 2015). Further, these individuals must think about working environment, how long they want to go to school, and their desired income. When an individual is looking to select a career, it is important to keep one's goals in mind as this leads to higher states of mental health and career satisfaction (Dik et al., 2008). Experiential learning helps inform and shape self-efficacy beliefs about academics and career choice (Ferry et al., 2000; Lent et al., 1994; Spanjaard et al., 2018). While these studies and those in agricultural education (Ingram et al., 2018; Thieman et al., 2016) make clear *what* is a significant influence, it is not always clear *how* this decision-making occurs. Broadly, both individuals and the environment have an influence on how careers are perceived (Beggs et al., 2008; Metheny & McWhirter, 2013). More specifically, students' views on family functioning (vocational interest and work values) predict students' vocational identity (Whiston & Keller, 2004).

Family functioning could more accurately predict a child's certainty of choice than other factors (Penick & Jepsen, 1992; Watson & McMahon, 2005). There is a well-established positive relationship between parents, especially fathers, and offspring's career choice (Gubler et al., 2017). Further, there is a relationship between parents having stable careers and children choosing to follow in their parents' footsteps. Parents influence both the child's perception and goals when choosing a career (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). The upbringing of individuals lays the foundation for a child's personality and the values that are transferred. Parents both directly and indirectly shape their child's environment, experiences, skills, and values, and give explicit expectations, which factor into their career decision making process later in life (Bukor, 2015; Schröder et al., 2011; Wasby & Daly, 1994). Parents develop the lens through which children see the world from a young age (Kazi & Akhlaq, 2017). Parents decide how much media the children are

exposed to, the school in which the child attends, the socioeconomic status the child is raised in, employment opportunities, satisfaction of work values, and many other social influences.

Retention as a Function of Teacher Identity and Beliefs

Values and perceptions are highly correlated, and students are most likely to choose a career they perceive as compatible with their own career values, which implies a connection to career choice and career identity (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Susan et al., 2004). Beyond career choice, teacher beliefs and identity may help us understand the retention dimension as a broader approach to viewing self-efficacy (Geiger & Pivovarova, 2018; McLennan et al., 2017). According to Nespor (1987), beliefs are described as episodic, highly personalized, and containing affective and evaluative components (Luft & Roehrig, 2007). Further, beliefs are personal constructions and entities belonging to an individual (Jones & Carter, 2007; Richardson, 1996). Teacher identity includes “their sense of their goals, responsibilities, style, effectiveness, level of satisfaction, and career trajectory” (Vidović & Domović, 2019, p. 121). Other scholars have defined identity as the idea teachers have of oneself (Beijaard & Meijer, 2017; Singh & Richards, 2006). Teachers’ beliefs are an integral part of a teacher’s identity and have a strong impact on professional behavior and actions (Vidović & Domović, 2019).

Developing sound teaching practices begins with a foundation of core beliefs (Edgar et al., 2009; Park & Rudd, 2005). Luft and Roehrig (2007) state, “...beliefs reveal how teachers view knowledge and learning, and suggest how they may enact their classroom practice” (p. 47). These beliefs will change throughout their education and career, being influenced by a new experiences and observations of the learning process (Sosu & Gray, 2012). Further, Rice and Kitchel (2018) found not only did epistemic beliefs affect teacher practices, but also the beliefs about the purpose of their subject and the content they teach. Teachers’ epistemic beliefs are a cornerstone piece of their career as it influences their instructional practice, teaching philosophy, and the development of teacher identity (Bukor, 2015). Beliefs have been shown to positively affect professional identity among teachers who have motivation and increased self-efficacy (Blackburn et al., 2019). Having the ability to overcome the many challenges teachers face when teaching agricultural education will lead to a higher resiliency in new teachers (Le Cornu, 2013; Masten, 2001). Therefore, having the exposure from a parent early on will allow students to be more prepared having already seen someone go through the challenges. It is these beliefs, practices, and philosophies that will ultimately shape a teacher’s identity.

Second generation agriculture teachers (SGATs) enter the profession with a unique understanding of the work and home life of an agriculture teacher. In one individual, they get both the influence of a parent, but also someone who is in the profession. The environment is also unique as SGATs have opportunities to see the profession up close before entering the career field, as many agriculture teachers struggle to balance work and home (Sorensen & McKim, 2014). This becomes important given the unique context of the agriculture teacher’s work and life as often difficulty to balance (Croom et al., 2011; Whittington, 2006), which potentially bleeds into both work and life worlds.

Purpose and Objectives

Studying SGATs helps us to understand emergent aspects of career decision-making and teacher beliefs and identity from cases who were saturated with exposure to the profession through a parent. The purpose of the study was to study cases of (SGATs) to garner their unique perspectives as it related to the recruitment (via career decision-making), and retention of agriculture teachers (via teacher beliefs and identity). The following research questions guided our work:

1. How did the agriculture teacher parent and their relationship with their SGAT child influence the child’s decision to become an agriculture teacher?
2. How did the agriculture teacher parent and their relationship with their SGAT child influence their beliefs and identity as an agriculture teacher?

Methods

This study was deemed an instrumental (focus on the issues as opposed to the case) and collective case study (consisting of several cases to examine a phenomenon, population or condition) using a pragmatist lens toward the issues of recruitment and retention (Creswell, 2013; Stake, 2010). Second generation agriculture teachers (SGATs) served as the bounded system for this case study. We utilized a purposive sampling technique and chose a sample meeting a certain set of qualifications (Tongco, 2007) aimed to ensure the parent's exposure of the career to the child/SGAT utilizing recruitment through social media as approved by IRB. Due to the nature of the study, the participants must have met very specific criteria: 1. the participant must currently be an agricultural educator, 2. the participant must have at least one parent who was/is an agricultural educator, 3. the agriculture teacher in study must have been older than 6 years when her or his parent(s) were an agriculture teacher so there were clear memories to draw upon and 4. the parent(s) had to have been an agriculture teacher for more than 5 years so there was sustained exposure to the profession by the family member in the study. We uploaded a post onto the Ag Education Discussion Lab on Facebook asking if interested individuals would direct message the author of the post if they were interested. Twenty-one people direct messaged to show interest in the research study. Thirteen people met the criteria and agreed to participate in the study. The post was on Facebook for one week and once we received more than the number of participants needed, the post was taken down. Of the participants, five of them were male and eight of them were female. Among the SGATs number of teaching years varies from one to 25 years. Among the fathers of the SGATs teaching experience ranged from six years of teaching experience to 40 plus years. These numbers are shown in Table 1.

Table 1

Years of teaching for the second generation agriculture teachers (SGAT) and their respective first generation agriculture teacher parent (FGAT).

Pseudonyms	Years of Teaching for FGAT	Years of Teaching for SGAT
Samantha	23	1
Beth	40	13
Joe	34	11
John	19	20
Sierra	31	17
Harry	33	2
Sarah	33	10
Nancy	33	10
Dave	33	15
Noah	30	13
Carley	33	17
Jane	38	9

Table 1

Years of teaching for the second generation agriculture teachers (SGAT) and their respective first generation agriculture teacher parent (FGAT), continued...

Mary	30	28
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All of the first generation agriculture teachers in the study were fathers. From 2014-2016, Lawver et al. (2018) indicated there was still a large majority of male agriculture teachers at 6,512 in 2016 and only 4,988 female ag teachers in the U.S. Between those demographics and the long-standing history of FFA being historically hyper-focused on education for boys (National FFA Organization, 2020), the researchers expected most or all parents of SGATs in the study were men at this point in time.

We engaged in semi-structure interviews as our main source of data and started to reach saturation around the eleventh interview. The interview followed an interview protocol of seven questions in length with three to ten questions below each to elicit more detailed answers from the participants. Some examples of interview questions and sub-questions included, “When was a moment or event or timeframe where/when you realized you wanted to be an ag teacher? Or was it a progression (and if so, talk about that progression)?,” “How would you characterize your childhood as an ag teacher’s child?” and “What did you learn from your parent as an ag teacher that you carry with you?.” The researchers also utilized field notes to bracket their experiences through the interview process and used those data to help contextualize the interviews during analysis.

In qualitative research, the researcher is the instrument with which data were collected (Creswell & Creswell, 2018). It is important to address positionality and briefly note relevant background. One researcher has been an agriculture teacher for 3 years and a teacher educator for over 15 years. Another researcher has completed an Agricultural Education degree but has not taught. A third researcher is an undergraduate majoring in Agricultural Education. All three researchers were students of Agricultural Education in high school and were actively involved and invested in their programs. Because of this vested interest, it was important we acknowledged our backgrounds as we collected and analyzed data and attempted to bracket our analysis against said positionality.

After verbatim transcriptions were finalized, each case (participant) was coded for general themes first while utilizing field notes to supplement the initial analysis. This initial coding first used opening coding to identify emergent codes and then an axial coding approach of identifying connections among those codes. The researchers then analyzed the data to find central themes that were common across all of the cases (participants) using a selective coding approach based on the individual cases’ axial coding to develop final themes. The theming process borrowed from Trustworthiness was established in several ways. One, because multiple researchers were engaged in case analyses, researchers independently analyzed the same case and reconciled differences prior to independent analyses. Two, interviews were triangulated against field notes. Three, findings are presented as themes with supporting statements and codes to provide thick, rich descriptions. Four, member checking was utilized to increase representation of the themes and as such, some themes were slightly modified to better capture the voices of the participants.

Findings

There were three overarching themes that emerged from the data. The first theme corresponds with the first research question, but also provides insight into the second research question. The second and third themes focus more on the second research question but gave understanding to the first question.

Experiencing the Profession and Its Impact Early

SGATs expressed having grown up with a greater understanding of the career than their peers. They not only knew their fathers' overarching role as an agriculture teacher and FFA advisor but also observed his day-to-day tasks. John stated,

[I] grew up on the farm and got to run the hallways of the high school. I remember watching dad grading papers and I remember the jackets and those are two images that stuck in my mind that you look at your parents and what they do you think is normal and to me it was never any different.

By observing many aspects of the profession, the SGATs saw both the best the career had to offer and the downsides that came with it. Jane shared,

I felt more prepared to go into this career than anybody else could because I saw all the stuff at home that had to be done and applications to be gone through I saw that you had to interact with those people.... And I remember telling [my dad] like, 'I've seen the worst of it.'

Not only did they garner unique knowledge about the career early, but they were also raised with experiences that immersed them into the profession early. Jane also stated, "I was in school from the time I was born.... I was around judging teams from the time I was little, that, you know, at night or after school if he had practice, I would stay with him and judge." This experience around the classroom often resulted in perceived greater content knowledge than the rest of their peers and excelling in the classroom and FFA competitions in high school. In addition, the content areas their father taught most frequently was often the cornerstone of their own content knowledge and would use it later in their own careers.

Beyond the content knowledge SGATs garnered, they shared the impact of trips prior to being an agricultural education student. Going on trips was a predominant sub-theme. Trips to, for example, stock shows, Career Development Events, and home visits led to greater knowledge in specific content areas and the career tasks of an agriculture teacher. Sarah said,

I'm serious, my dad took me everywhere. We went in backpacks with him on summer ag visits, when he took his kids to like the [city] stock show we would go with him to the [city] stock show as a family...

Similarly, Samantha stated,

I kind of was a little kid being packed to FFA events. I went to my first state convention when I was like a couple months old. Um. Because my in my dad's family of 10 kids like seven of them were state officers in that family. And so, like, it was just kind of a really big part of our lives growing up.

Participants recognized these trips as unique experiences, exclusive from what their peers had. While some viewed these trips as vacations others would think of them as common part of their childhood. What was common in the responses is the fond memories associated with them and further experience in the industry.

The affect their father and his career had on the SGATs extended far beyond content knowledge as many addressed the impact their father had on others through their career. Sierra said,

I love the rapport [my father] had with his students. Like I could see their interactions.... and how they interacted with him and they respected him.... That relationship that he was able to build with his students because of the time he would spend with them, like it's more than just the classroom time it's, you know, the projects the trainings, the travel. It's you really get to know them...

This impact on students was a trait many SGATs wanted to emulate, and participants were aware of the role an agriculture teacher had outside of the classroom as well. Joe reflects, "As far as my childhood, I also saw a lot of the interactions that the students had and how much fun they had throughout the time... That's everything from weddings, funerals, to all the individual things you have on the side...". Joe also spoke about the noticeable impact his father had on students,

I remember going there whenever I was six, seven. I remember the, the students, the seniors that would get up and they would cry and they would talk about the impact that dad had on them... So,

I was teaching whenever he retired. So, I was able to go to his retirement ceremony and he had several people there, several former students there and they all stood up, talked, had a conversation about the impact that he had.

SGATs understood their fathers' impact extended far beyond the classroom, and for many this was a major factor in choosing the same career. In many ways, this involvement shaped their childhood and was the foundation of their career decision and current teaching practices.

Father Shaped Identity as a Role Model

All SGATs stated their fathers were role models in their given career field. SGATs gained perspectives on the amount of work it takes to be an agriculture teacher, which led to being prepared to have a balance that fits their needs. Some of the participants are teaching the same content and are striving to be like their fathers while others respect their fathers and hold similar overarching values but have decided to teach different content and/or use different strategies. For example, when Noah was asked what content areas he learned from his father he carries today, he replied "Almost none. My dad was zero percent mechanically inclined and I'm all shop. So far as content goes almost none." When Dave was asked about the difference between his father's program model and his own, he said, "I think our three circle models, very similar. Because I mean pretty much everything I've learned, that I do my classroom, even though it's been so many years. It's still similar.

Some noted long hours and difficulty with their fathers finding balance; others noted seeing a balance. Jane stated her father had good balance but didn't know how intentional it was. For Mary, her father had an off switch at home when it came to work. Almost all of the SGATs mentioned making effort into a home balance regardless of the modeling. Harry spoke about he and his sister joining FFA to get to know their father,

My dad was really dedicated to teaching and sometimes didn't have time. My sister jokingly said, 'Well, I joined FFA to get to know my dad.' In some ways, I kind of agree because my dad was super involved with FFA that as a kid, and my dad's an introvert and so, he just wouldn't talk.

On the surface, most SGATs said they teach similarly to how their father taught but they are using modern methods of teaching that use more technology than their fathers. Related, SGATs surfaced shared tenets of their fathers' philosophies. Nancy spoke about how, unique to her, she is not as set in stone on what she focuses on with her students,

I will follow a kid down whatever rabbit hole... and I don't know that that was something that not necessarily he was open to or something that maybe even ever was presented that much.

As a sub-theme, one value heard across many cases was the idea that if you are going to do something, do it right. This was a value that drove many of the SGAT's fathers' pedagogy as many of the SGATs are also teaching this value in their given program. This is seen in the execution of daily activities, fundraisers, annual banquets, and other FFA events. The majority of work is being done by the students with the oversight of their advisor. Nancy gave an example of her dad always trying to be his best,

...because I know why he works so much, he would redo every flippin' worksheet, instead of like using the one from the previous year. That takes some serious time, but he would still at teaching you know, however many years would be like, "No, I think there's a better way to do it like I think it should be set up like this" and would like not reuse the worksheet or whatever it may be.

This value wasn't just evident within the classroom, but in the overall career of being an agriculture teacher. Noah said that one of the main skills he learned growing up with his father was, "...in your career if you aren't going to do something and not put your best work forward you should do something else."

The value of developing good relationships with the students was also important. Mary noted the value her father placed on relationships by giving an example of her father taking two kids without an agricultural background under his wing and then seeing the respect they showed to him because of it. Noah

spoke about his father and how his impact is still being recognized within the school and community. One of the popular tenets espoused by the SGATs focused attention on freshmen and new members. Joe spoke about the importance his father placed on building a relationship with freshman by saying,

... the best advice, it might even be the only advice that my dad gave me on, on teaching was, "Whenever you teach freshmen be excited every day."... It's very important to be excited with your, with your freshman because that's, that's your future.

The value of developing good relationships with students was important to many of the fathers – something their children acknowledged for themselves. Noah spoke about his father and how his impact is still being recognized within the school and at places like the fair. This value was often seen in catchphrases like, "if you are going to be the teacher, be the teacher" and "make a positive difference in the lives of students." Joe talked about how his father valued relationships and took this away, "At the core of all of our jobs, at the core of everything, relationships are most important." To both Nancy and her father, they try to accept every kid for who they are:

I have kids that are completely failing my class. Doesn't mean they're not my favorite kid. Doesn't mean that I'm not helping them in every way that I can. Like we have a great relationship, and I remember just being like, "I don't understand this like this is not a great – like this kid is not going to go on to become anything" but like, he still has this great connection with them and they're like talking about future careers and like, just helping them in that manner that I didn't quite understand how that could be. Now I totally get it because I'm sitting here looking at their small engines going X, Y and Z, yes. I think that is in with everyone just very accepting of people, and especially you know now mean what does a kid need more than just to be okay with who they are and know that somebody is okay with that.

Growing up with an agriculture teacher as a parent the SGATs experienced what the work-life balance was like. The SGATs didn't just see the time commitment at school they also saw it at home. Many of the SGATs talked about how their father spent a great deal of time working and maybe too much time at the school. Noah gave an example where his father ran a full school animal farm and taught a full class schedule. Similarly, Samantha said, "... he would like literally work 12 hours a day every single day. And then he would come home and farm... He also, like, lays carpet and, like, and you know installs flooring." In many cases, if the SGAT wanted to spend time with their father it would have to be at the school with them. When Nancy was asked if she felt her father was a busy ag teacher, she responded with,

So very, very busy... my child is at school with me so at 3:05 when I am released almost every day unless we have plans, like we are going home at that time. So, I work through my lunch and I work through my plan and I get everything done because, well now with [Name] you can't get that done at home. But he was very, very busy.

Others demonstrated a balance between school and home life that the SGAT attempted to emulate. Jane stated, "I would say that he balanced being a parent and an ag teacher very well and I don't even know that he did that intentionally." As noted earlier, Mary spoke about how her father had an off switch at home. Almost all of the SGATs mentioned in some form or fashion that they have made an effort to either mimic the ability of their father and be present at home or in the situation where the father was more absent, they decided to make an effort to be home more than he was. It caught our attention that, in multiple instances, the SGATs mentioned knowing the commitment it took to be an agriculture teacher and therefore, when they were looking for a partner, they knew that they had to find someone who understands the workload. Nancy spoke about how she chose a partner who could be a support system for her,

Okay, so I remember like dating people. After I knew that I wanted to be that teacher and was like, 'Oh, we're just dating. This isn't going anywhere because you couldn't handle this.' ...I knew that I didn't want to end up like all of those people and I just remember like this is going to take the right type of person, and [Name] is definitely that right type of person, but the time and the... just making choices when it comes to a relationship and what you, what type of support system you needed.

Others felt that taking on less of a workload is required in raising a family. Sierra talked about why she only teaches junior high,

I won't be able to dedicate the time needed to do a great job at it. I would never be able to be good enough because my own children have to come first, like they all do sports and travel and clubs in all types of things. And I have to be able to be there for them. But in the middle school level. I feel like I can.

Similarly, Samantha talked about how she won't be able to be a good mother if she puts in the same amount of work as her father. It is worthy to note that gendered roles of parents may play a role here. SGATs gained perspective on how much work it takes to be an agriculture teacher and with this experience are more prepared to have a balance that fits themselves. The long hours can play a toll but since they have the experience of growing up in their situation, they know some of the steps to be successful.

Implicitly Inherited Beliefs Shaped SGAT Career Decision-Making, Beliefs and Identity

While the previous theme discussed SGATs' cognizant use of their father as a model, there was also an implicit influence observed. SGATs parents shaped the environment they were raised in, instilling passions, knowledge, and values that led to their career decisions. These characteristics were not initially attributed to their father; they saw them as a natural part of their personality. However, their father seemed to be a source of these characteristics upon deeper reflection by the participants and further analysis. This indicates the expansive influence their father truly has, the breadth of which is difficult to know because of its often-unconscious affect.

Teaching practices and beliefs are areas observed as similarities between participants and their fathers. Though as was stated, some did not make this connection until in hindsight. Nancy simply said, "Gosh, I'm not realizing how similar we teach until now." Jane expounded:

I think that he and I both believe that, in order to have that full experience program needs to be really well rounded that you need to have fairly equal, you know, emphasis put on classroom and FFA and SAEs. And then again, I mean, that's probably where I got the majority of my philosophy for that is from him.

For clarity, however, this does not imply SGATs were striving to have programs *exactly* like their father as noted in the previous theme. The changing times, student demographics, and geography tended to influence teaching practices that worked well for SGATs' fathers but were less effective in a different context for their children. Some spoke on how changing technologies impact the way they taught and caused them to teach differently than their fathers. To personify this idea, Joe describes how he and his dad had common teaching beliefs, yet different teaching practices:

Make everything relatable... you have to find a way to make things relatable. And for me...I'm an analogy guy. I am a simile, this...is like this, this is the way this works.... Like ...a lot of the ways my dad taught... and he would always try to make things relatable, even if it was a new novel or foreign concept, he would try to make it so that they could understand it and quote, "get it". And for me, it's just much the same way.

The ways the fathers impacted their child's career decision was also not always seen directly. Three common reasons participants chose agricultural education as a career were because of a passion for agriculture, the desire for a particular lifestyle, and their skills fit well in the position. Carley spoke about this idea directly:

I grew up on a hog farm. A small hog farm, but I was always involved in it and you know I did 4H, I did FFA, I did all those things. And I just, I love, I still love the rural lifestyle and, you know, living on my acreage with no neighbors. It's beautiful.

Similarly, SGATs mentioned how a career in agricultural education allowed them to live the lifestyle they desired. Sarah describes how, for her, being a teacher coincides well with her cattle business and family life:

I really enjoyed the fact that I could be involved in agriculture and still receive a paycheck coming from the ag background of having a cattle business. I know that not every year are you going to receive a big paycheck from the cattle business. So, I like the fact that I had a steady income and still involved in agriculture and could still have a family. I think that's probably what my dad showed me the most as when I was younger, is that I could be an ag teacher and still... like have an effective ag teaching program and still have a family.

An interesting contrast here is that Sarah mentions her father was a model for her values but does not question how she came to acquire those values. This was common amongst the participants. Even though it was never explicitly stated, one would assume, at least to some degree, fathers had a part in developing those values in the SGATs. After all, Sarah's desire to have a family and raise cattle were values held common with her father.

For Joe, a primary reason he chose agricultural education was because of his skills and personality which he felt fit well in the career. He explained:

The more that I thought about it, the more that I realized that my aptitudes were not task-based, they were more people based. And I realized that my, my "resume," ... at the time was just catered to Agricultural Education and... I felt like I aligned with it with personnel was and aptitudes that I had. So, I felt like I was serving myself and setting myself up for greater success by just staying true to myself.

SGATs inherited values, skills, practices, and beliefs from their father by immersion. Considering their father's career, the characteristics passed on to their child would be much like those of an agricultural teacher. Perhaps this is why Samantha describes their career decision as a "natural next step", a sentiment many of the participants expressed. Jane describes factors for choosing their career in agricultural education:

I mean, that's kind of the life I knew and growing up, I loved going with my dad to school for livestock practice or, you know, he would take me on trips, when I was younger. And since I grew up, you know, with that... and in the middle of nowhere... and agriculture was just such a big part of my life. It kind of, I don't know, made sense for me to kind of continue that on and be able to share that with other kids because I love again small town and we did travel some. But I loved being able to you know get to meet other kids from other schools and go places and participate in contests and, you know, learn about weird random stuff in class that you would never learn about any other place. So, I just wanted to take that you know that I had grown up with and be able to share that with other kids who might not ever get those opportunities.

Here Jane cites seven factors: knowledge of career, travel, agriculture, meeting new people, passion for work, learning, and teaching. These are values inherited from their father by being around him and his work. So, it naturally follows that Jane would choose a career in agricultural education as they inherited their career values from an agricultural educator who they observed living out these values daily. It is as if their career decision was less of a selection from a list of possibilities and more an extension of their own values and experiences.

Discussion

This study underscores what we knew from previous research, in that parents are influential in career decision and in the formation of beliefs and identity discussed in the literature review (Schröder et al., 2011; Wasby & Daly, 1994; Young et al., 1991). However, it was important to capture the nuances of what does and does not translate from generation to generation. We posited that those nuances would clarify issues related to teacher recruitment and retention, and the findings supported that notion. In particular, understanding the experiences and significant influences on SGATs was designed as a framework that can

help unpack several important factors that can be applied broadly to the profession. Ultimately, three modes of influence were identified that could help us understand recruitment and retention.

One, immersion was important and included both personal and professional aspects and the interconnectedness of the two. Participants had little mention of things that “surprised” them when they entered the profession. Literature highlights that both career decision-making and identity have multiple factors (Penick & Jepsen, 1992; Whiston, & Keller, 2004; Watson & McMahon, 2005); immersion by the SGATs helped us understand that in a unique way. SGATs observed how their fathers balanced work and home life, how their fathers interacted with the community, and time with their family among others. Further discussed in literature was how values and perceptions of students are correlated and students are going to select a career where they see one’s own self-compatible (Kyriacou & Coulthard, 2000; Susan et al., 2004). If students see themselves as compatible with their agriculture teacher’s role, they may choose that career path. Because immersion was impactful to recruitment and retention, providing immersive experiences to potential agricultural teachers could lead to career success. We recommend studying career immersion further in teacher preparation programs as that may be helpful to determine what immersive experiences pre-service and early career teachers would need to develop their career trajectory and identity. Conversely, it might also be important to study agriculture teachers’ children who chose not to teach to see what about their immersion might have deterred entering the same field as their parent.

Secondly, this study reinforces the influence role models and mentors play in shaping beliefs and perceptions, which in turn impacts careers. When pairing the second and third themes, we conclude this influence is both explicit and implicit. Teachers and other role models play a pivotal role in career development and guiding students towards career objectives (Marx et al., 2014; Metheny et al., 2008; Park & Rudd, 2005). While not every participant desired to entirely emulate their father, the father’s career was used as a baseline understanding of what is expected. This is supported by literature as it relates in individuals’ influences (Beggs et al., 2008; Metheny & McWhirter, 2013). SGATs noted the role modeling was both subconscious and conscious, making it difficult to understand the fullness of this impact. What was evident was that their fathers impacted their beliefs, both when choosing a career and decisions made once in the career. This coincides with Gubler et al. (2017) in that, parents directly and indirectly shape their child’s environment, experiences, skills, and values. Role modeling underscores the importance of mentoring in pre-service and early career teachers; therefore, we recommend future practice and studies take into account role modeling as a component of career choice and mentoring. Further, it was mentioned multiple times that the SGATs made a conscious effort to find a partner that would understand what the work-life balance of being an agriculture teacher takes. This was surprising to hear to the degree this was prominent across the interviews. We further recommend that research on work-life balance take note and incorporate this idea in future investigations.

Related to role modeling, understanding the impact of the career was important. This supports prior research identifying social value as one of the most influential factors in choosing a career (Ingram et al., 2018; Park & Rudd, 2005). When SGATs spoke about how their father influenced them, they highlighted the impact the father had on their students and/or members of the community. This impact was easily observed and highly valued. This is supported by previous research stating that agriculture teachers are able to inspire new teachers when they are displaying the attributed of the profession in a positive manner (Marx et al., 2014; Park & Rudd, 2005). It is recommended to dive deeper in the concepts of student impact by the teacher for both research and practice. Beyond student impact it is also recommended to do a similar study where the second generation teachers were influenced by their mother to see the difference in influence between a mother and a father as the first generation role model. Recruitment efforts should pivot their focus on highlighting the impact of the profession from not the teachers’ perspectives, but by their students. Capturing the voices of students and how their agriculture teacher influenced their lives, could be an important aspect to the recruitment and retention puzzle.

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