

ORGANIZATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL FACTORS RELATED TO RETENTION
OF COUNTY EXTENSION AGENTS EMPLOYED BY TEXAS
A&M AGRILIFE EXTENSION SERVICE

A Dissertation

by

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to identify factors that contribute to why county extension agents choose to stay employed with the Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Demographics that have been identified define the relationship levels that exist between organizational, work and non-work individual related factors with demographics of why county extension agents choose to remain employed with Extension. The data for the target population were collected from 560 Texas county Extension agents.

A web-based questionnaire was used to collect data for this study. The questionnaire was adapted by the researcher from a previously used instrument conducted on county Extension agent turnover by the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service. The questions were modified to reflect why agents stay with Extension as opposed to why agents leave Extension. The researcher used a Likert scale to measure attitudes, knowledge, perceptions, values, and behavior changes. Content validity of the questionnaire was established by a panel of Extension administrators. Data was analyzed using SPSS 2014 software package. Descriptive statistics were utilized to analyze the data including means, medians, standard deviations, percentages, and frequencies. Correlation matrix and reliability were calculated employing Cronbach's alpha. Construct is the hypothetical variable that is being measured. All observed variables, except the demographic and open-ended items, were subjected to Shapiro-Wilk test for normality and were found to have a normal distribution. *T*-test (independent samples) were utilized to predict the dependent variables (organizational, individual work, and individual non-work factors) with the

independent variables (demographic factors) with only two choices (ex: male and female) for reasons why county Extension agents choose to stay in Extension. Analysis of variance F-tests were utilized to predict the dependent variables with demographic factors with two or more choices (ex: ethnicity) for reasons why county Extension agents choose to stay in Extension.

The ultimate goal and mission of Extension is carried out through employees. Retention of these employees and continuing to decrease employee turnover is paramount for Extension to attain its primary goal of education.

DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to the three most important people in my life: my wife Mandy, daughter Chloe, and my son Travis. From the time my classes started, through the mid-terms and finally while I worked on this paper they willingly allowed me the time this research effort and degree required. For four years my immediate family has sacrificed and allowed me this opportunity. Mandy, Chloe and T have put up with me missing out on important family time, and missing out on memorable activities. I can't put into words how much I love them and what their support means to me.

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CHAPTER I
INTRODUCTION

Background and Setting

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service (AgriLife Extension) is a state outreach organization that works with other Texas A&M System partners, the state legislature, and the communities it serves with the mission of providing quality, relevant outreach and continuing education programs and services to the people of Texas. This mission extends knowledge and resources from the land-grant Texas A&M University while engaging the community and fulfilling public needs. It is comprised of state, district, and county educators, administrators, and professionals linked to the land-grant university. The relevance of AgriLife Extension is unmatched in state, public or private sectors because of its accessibility, research based-material and unique combination of resources that are available to clientele. AgriLife Extension plays an important role in identifying public needs and responding with educational programs (Arnold, 2007). With a vast network of 250 county Extension offices and 560 county Extension agents, the expertise provided by AgriLife Extension is available to every resident in every Texas County (Dromgoole, 2013). AgriLife Extension custom-designs its programs to different areas of the state, significantly depending on residents for input and program delivery.

The mission of AgriLife Extension is a seemingly simple one: improving the lives of people, businesses, and communities across Texas and beyond through high-

quality, relevant education (“AgriLife extension strategic,” 2011). Carrying out this mission, however, is a massive undertaking, one that requires the commitment of each and every one of the agency’s employees. The areas of service include Family and Consumer Sciences (FCS), Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR), and 4-H/Youth Development (4-H/YD). County agents teach healthy lifestyles, promote positive living, and encourage sustainability. ANR agents teach conservation; best management agricultural practices; and create efficient and sustainable animal production, cropping, horticulture, and farming systems (Weyhrauch, Culbertson, Fullagar, & Mills, 2010). These service areas all have long lasting effects on community development. By providing research-based information, educational programs, and technology transfer focused on the issues and needs of the people, clientele are enabled to make informed decisions about their economic, social and cultural well-being. These professionals, the Extension agents, are the avenue to provide services that allow for continued education of communities and allow people to improve their overall quality of life. Reliance on qualified personnel to perform these functions is integral to organizational success and community development (Seevers, et. Al 1997). The ability to recruit these long-term, high-quality professionals is a direct reflection of a successful organization (Arnold & Place, 2010b).

The agricultural industry plays a significant role in Texas’s public and economic welfare. According to the United States Department of Agriculture 2007 Census of Ag, Texas ranks 2nd in the U.S. in total value of agricultural products sold (“USDA, Texas – ranking,” 2014). Over 245,000 farms produce agriculture commodities for a total

production value of \$21 billion (“USDA state agriculture overview,” 2012). The total food and fiber system includes all economic activities linked to agricultural production, such as machinery repair, fertilizer production, food processing and manufacturing, transportation, wholesale distribution of products, retail sales, and eating establishments. Although the value of production, or gross receipts, is often used as an indicator of economic impact, a more appropriate measure is the contribution to the state’s gross domestic product (GDP). A state’s GDP is derived as the sum of the gross domestic product originating in all industries in that state (“The food and,” 2013). In 2010, Texas’ GDP was \$1.22 trillion. The food and fiber system’s total estimated contribution was \$108 billion, or approximately 8.9% of the state’s total GDP (“The food and,” 2013). Agricultural cash receipts, including timber, average \$20 billion annually. Texas ranks fourth in the nation in agricultural exports totaling \$8 billion in 2011 (“Texas department of,” 2014). The agriculture industry offers significant contributions to local economies, the State of Texas, the nation and the world. Producers must be educated and informed of the constant changes in agriculture with technologies, production practices, markets and consumer demand. Extension educational programs address current and emerging agriculture issues and transfer reliable and relevant information to these agriculture producers.

There are multiple challenges for Extension to remain relevant and to be maintained. Threats extend beyond financial; Extension is also threatened by competing governmental factions, competitive advantages in privatization, social media, and a negative political climate (Hoag 2005; King & Boehlje, 2000; Boehlje, 1998).

According to the Extension Committee on Organization and Policy (2002), recruitment is one of the top internal challenges currently facing the Cooperative Extension System. The ability to recruit and retain long-term, high quality professionals must be a high priority for Extension to remain a viable and successful educational outreach system (Conklin, Hook, Kielbaugh, & Nieto, 2002). The future will ultimately be determined on how well the organization approaches these critical areas to accomplish its goals and mission (ECOP, 2002). Therefore, this issue must be a high priority that Extension must address to remain a viable educational outreach system. The development of innovative recruitment, hiring, and compensation strategies that attract and retain employees is critical to organizational growth (ECOP, 2002). According to Graham (1994), the Cooperative Extension Service organization is considered the “largest network of out-of-school non-formal education” in the world. The strength of Extension is its ability to transmit-based information and the involvement of its clientele in determining, planning, and implementing programs that meet their needs. In the last two decades Cooperative Extension has experienced major transformational changes in terms of programs, finances, and personnel (ECOP, 2002). The rapidly globalizing economy and increasingly complex clients have created major concerns and shifting priorities for Cooperative Extension. Regardless of priorities, the effectiveness of the Extension programs greatly depends on the delivery approach and competencies of the Extension agent (Lakai, Jayaratne, Moore & Kistler, 2011). Cooperative Extension’s role as a provider of non-formal education relies on its ability to improve and adjust in response to internal and external pressures (Harder, Lamm & Strong, 2009).

Statement of the Problem

Turnover of employees is inevitable; and by identifying why people choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension, the organization can actively respond to those factors that positively affect retention. Turnover refers to the voluntary termination of participation in employment for an organization, excluding retirement or pressured voluntary withdrawal, by an individual who receives monetary compensation from the organization (Rossano, 1985). Administration of any Extension organization is concerned with turnover

Outstanding local county Extension agents that are well connected to a community are a key asset of Extension. Turnover of these employees' leads to a loss of accumulated knowledge and experience; loss of valuable relationships in the community; temporary voids in programming and volunteer participation; and additional strain on the remaining staff (Bradley, Driscoll & Barden, 2012). For Extension to survive in this increasingly competitive world, it must prepare its faculty to survive; it also must prepare its faculty to grow, adapt, and thrive in a changing environment (Arnold and Place, 2010a).

Costs of refilling the positions and training new staff are a financial and time drain that ripples throughout Extension (Ensle, 2005; Strong and Harder, 2009). There is an investment in the development of an employee, the value of the knowledge and experience gained, and the lost productivity that accompanies turnover (Mowbray, 2002). Research suggests that a 1-percentage-point increase in the overall retention rate of Extension agents nationwide (80 agents x \$80,000 agent replacement cost) could

reduce organizational expenses by \$6.4 million dollars annually (Kutilek, 2000). For all positions except executives and physicians – jobs that require very specific skills – the typical cost of turnover was 21 percent of an employee’s salary (Boushey & Glynn, 2012). It is costly to replace workers because of the productivity losses when someone leaves a job, the costs of hiring and training a new employee, and the slower productivity until the new employee gets up to speed in the new job.

There have been many studies evaluating why agents leave Extension but only a few researching why agents choose to remain employed with Extension. While it is important to examine why county extension agents leave the profession, it is equally important to examine the factors that motivate individuals to remain with the organization. There are many reasons that an individual will remain within a given organization. Some of these reasons include salary, benefits, job security, and the ability to retire within the organization (Jennings, 1998). There is a continuing need to study the factors associated with employee turnover in Extension (Kutilek, 2000).

Determining why agents leave is important, but determining why they choose to stay and promoting these reasons will have long term benefits to the organization in maintaining productive employees who will deliver the high quality educational programs the people of Texas want and deserve (Chandler, 2005).

Purpose of the Study

The purpose of the study was to determine the organizational and individual factors related to job retention of Texas county Extension agents and learn why agents

choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension. The design used was for two major purposes: 1) to explore relationships between variables, and 2) to predict scores on one variable from subjects' scores on other variables (Gall, Borg, & Gall, 2006).

Specific Objectives

- Objective 1: Describe the demographics as related to factors among county Extension agents' who choose to remain employed with Extension.
- Objective 2: Determine the factors that contribute to county Extension agents choosing to remain employed with Extension under the categories of dependent (organizational, work and non-work individual factors) and independent (demographics) variables.
- Objective 3: Identify patterns and define relationships between factors that contribute to retention of county Extension agents.
- Objective 4: Identify patterns and themes that can be used as predictors of why county Extension agents choose to remain employed with Extension.

Theoretical Basis of the Study

The theoretical base for this study utilizes professional research in Extension, job retention, recruitment, and turnover. Research conducted by (Chandler, 2005; Mobley, 1982; Mowbray, 2002, & Rousan, 1995) serve as a wide base for this study as well as providing the background to emphasize the relevance of this study. The expanded model of the employee turnover process by Mobley and colleagues included many components

but proved to be too cumbersome to utilize. Mobley refined that model and came up with his simplified model of causes and correlates of turnover that identifies four general classes of factors that cause turnover – either directly, indirectly, causally or correlationally (Mowbray, 2002). Turnover is a problem for Extension as increased burnout and staff turnover are monetarily expensive and an inefficient use of time management (Ensle, 2005). Rousan (1995) studied the Ohio State University Cooperative Extension Service and published a dissertation in which he sought not so much to predict turnover, but to understand the process by describing factors leading to turnover and classifying them according to Mobley's simplified model of causes and correlates of turnover. Mobley's simplified model of causes and correlates of turnover (Mobley, 1982) were the conceptual model used in this study. For the individual, leaving a job may cause temporary loss of income and benefits, family stress, problems with individual self-esteem, and possibly sustained unemployment and relocation for the individual and family (Mobley, 1982).

There are numerous research studies on employee turnover. According to Young, Stone, Aliaga, and Shuck (2013) there are two primary types: the employer perspective, where organizations examine and leverage the reasons people leave an organization and focus on fixing what is wrong; and the employee perspective, which focuses on leveraging retention, and studies why people choose to stay and capitalizes on the strengths of a job or work environment. This job embeddedness theory (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski & Erez, 2001), offers a method of discovering why people stay in an organization.

According to Brodeur, Higgins, Gonzalez, Craig and Haile (2011), voluntary personnel turnover occurs for a multitude of reasons including lack of proper “on-boarding.” On-boarding would refer to new employees acquiring skills, information, and knowledge by training through various methods to become effective employees. Near, Smith, Rice and Hunt (1984) studied the effects job satisfaction had on life satisfaction and concluded that job satisfaction and working conditions contributed little to life satisfaction. Furthermore, working conditions influenced non-work satisfaction significantly and living conditions were significantly related to job satisfaction. Herzberg (1968) theorized that employees must be motivated to experience job satisfaction but that unacceptable working conditions can only result in a lack of satisfaction. Several studies note the effectiveness of Extension is dependent upon the motivation of its employees (Buford, 1990; Chesney, 1992; Smith, 1990). Knowing what motivates employees and incorporating this knowledge into the reward system will help Extension identify, recruit, employ, train, and retain a productive work force (Chandler, 2005). Extension employees must provide open feedback to administrators in regards to satisfaction and motivation. Likewise Extension administrators must be not only receptive to negative feedback, but a visible effort must be made by the administrators to address negative satisfaction and motivation factors. Employee studies, research, and questionnaires are extremely useful in helping Extension managers determine what motivates employees (Bowen & Radhakrishna, 1991).

The quality of personnel determines the abilities, skills, and competence of the Extension organization (ECOP, 2002). According to Clark (1981), the impact of

turnover is especially apparent in educational organizations like Extension, where the bulk of the organization production system is dependent upon its employees. Agents need to recognize the various factors that determine job satisfaction and understand that a weakness in those factors increases stress, thereby decreasing job satisfaction (Riggs & Beus, 1993). Herzberg, Mausner, and Snyderman (1967) claimed that one of the major reasons for measuring job satisfaction is to answer the question “What does the worker want from his/her job?” - and further, the answer to this question will assist management in discovering new methods of motivating employees.

Identifying differences among focal areas will provide insight to Extension directors seeking to improve training, selection, and performance management procedures by tailoring them according to their varied work environments (Weyhrauch, Culbertson, Mills & Fullagar, 2010). Staff will not be encouraged in their occupation when appropriately planned incentive methods are not put into practice (Lindner, 1998). By doing this, the organization should be promoting greater productivity, health, satisfaction and this in turn should decrease employee turnover.

Research Question

The major research questions in this study address factors that are relevant as to why county Extension agents choose to stay employed with Extension:

1. Identify the personal and professional characteristics of county Extension agents who have chosen to remain employed with AgriLife Extension. Characteristics used to describe these agents include: a) age, b) gender, c) marital status, d) number of children,

e) educational level, f) years of employment, g) area/region, h) position title, i) county population, j) first career choice, k) served in multiple counties l) how many counties, m) thought of leaving Extension, n) left Extension and were rehired, o) dossier level.

2. What are the factors that contribute to county Extension agents choosing to remain employed with AgriLife Extension under the broad categories of organizational, individual work-related, and individual non-work related?

3. Identify patterns and themes related to retention from the analysis of the data collected from county Extension agents. The organizational factors in this study were: a) opportunities for advancement, b) variety of work, c) office environment, d) quality of support staff, e) recognition from supervisor, f) understanding of supervisor, g) task repetitiveness, h) benefits/retirement, i) salary, j) support of Extension specialist, k) job security, l) direct supervisor checks on work performance, and m) training.

The individual non-work related factors identified for this study were: a) opportunities for personal growth and development, b) opportunities for outside employment, c) status in the community, d) interaction with community leaders, e) opportunity to contribute to community, f) personal obligation/work obligations, g) secondary education, h) time with family.

The individual work-related factors focused on in the study were: a) workload, b) interesting work, c) opportunities to travel, d) recognition, e) professional development, g) flexible hours, g) personal satisfaction, h) professional relationships, i) challenging work, j) opportunities to work with own children in the program, k) involvement in organizational decisions, l) job requirements, and m) job requirements/expectations.

Delimitation

This study is delimited to the 560 Texas county Extension agents with AgriLife Extension. The county Extension agents included in this study represent the following program areas: Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Science, 4-H and Youth Development, Coastal Marine Agent, Natural Resource, Urban Youth Development, County Extension Director, and Horticulture. According to Dromgoole (2013) prior to 2010 there were 601 agents. As of today there are 560 county Extension agents. This number fluctuates. Table 1 provides an overview of county staffing by District and Table 2 provides an overview of the number of positions by title.

Table 1 County Extension Agent Staffing by District

District	1 agent	2 agent	3 agent	4 agent	>4 agent	Shared County	Shared Positions
1	4	14	4	-	-	1	1 FCS
2	2	14	1	2	1	-	4 IPM & 1 FCS
3	7	13	4	-	-	-	1 FCS
4	3	8	3	3	1	1	1 IPM
5	3	12	6	2	-	-	-
6	7	10	1	-	1	2	1 IPM, 1 Hor., & 1 FCS
7	11	9	2	1	-	-	4 FCS & 2 IPM
8	4	8	7	2	-	-	3 IPM & 1 FCS
9	3	8	7	-	2	-	1 Marine
10	4	10	3	2	2	-	-
11	2	7	5	2	1	-	2 IPM
12	7	5	2	-	2	1	1 IPM

Dromgoole 2013, County Extension Agent Retention Analysis-2013

Table 2 *County Extension Agent Positions by Title*

Title	Number of Positions
Agriculture and Natural Resources	249
Family and Consumer Science	200
4-H and Youth Development	69
Coastal Marine Agent	6
Natural Resource	5
Urban Youth Development	2
County Extension Director	6
Horticulture	19

n 556

Dromgoole 2013, County Extension Agent Retention Analysis-2013

Table 3 illustrated county staffing positions by district and position. There are 12 districts in AgriLife Extension.

Table 3 *County Staffing Position by District*

District	Ag.	FCS	4-H	NR.	Hort	Marine	UYD	CED	Total
1	21	18	4	-	-	-	-	-	43
2	21	19	3	-	-	-	-	-	43
3	24	17	4	-	-	-	-	-	45
4	20	19	7	1	5	-	-	1	53
5	22	19	7	-	2	-	-	-	50
6	21	13	2	-	2	-	-	1	39
7	23	16	3	-	1	-	-	-	43
8	21	18	9	2	-	-	-	-	50
9	18	18	10	-	5	3	1	2	57
10	21	18	7	2	2	-	1	2	53
11	18	15	8	-	1	2	-	-	44
12	19	10	5	-	1	1	-	-	36

n 249 200 69 5 19 6 2 6 556

Dromgoole 2013, County Extension Agent Retention Analysis-2013

Limitations

This study sought to explain the unique experiences and factors affecting decisions to remain employed with AgriLife Extension for each individual county Extension agent, so the findings cannot be generalized for all AgriLife Extension employees. AgriLife Extension specialist, administration, program assistants and support staff were not included in this study. Turnover can be voluntary or involuntary. If county Extension agents chose to leave the organization on their own, without any pressure from the organization, it is considered as voluntary turnover. If county Extension agents chose to terminate employment with the organization as a result of organizational pressure or if the organization terminates an employee due to performance, retirement, or other reasons, this action is considered involuntary. Voluntary turnover is our focus in this study. Any involuntary data included in this study is for future reference and use of Extension administration.

Definition of Terms

County Extension Agent: refers to an employee of AgriLife Extension who is involved in identifying, planning, and implementing educational programs at the county level for clientele.

Employee Retention: refers to the ability of an organization to retain employees. In this study retention means remaining in paid service.

Employee Turnover: Cessation of membership in an organization by an individual who receives monetary compensation from the organization (Mobley, 1982).

Program Area/Position Description: Job title correlates with the Texas County Extension Agent's job responsibility. Example: Agriculture and Natural Resources (CEA-Ag/Nr) primary responsibility is to be the educational program leader for all agriculture related topics. These agricultural topics will vary by community and region. The other job descriptions are as follows: County Extension Agent-4-H and Youth Development (CEA-4-H), County Extension Agent-Family and Consumer Science (CEA-FCS), County Extension Agent-Marine (CEA-M), County Extension Agent-Natural Resources (CEA-Nr), County Extension Agent-Urban Youth Development (CEA-UYD), County Extension Agent-Horticulture (CEA-Hort), County Extension Director (CEA-Dir).

AgriLife Extension: Texas A&M University System agency, which provides quality, relevant, outreach and continuing education programs and services to the people of Texas (Chandler, 2005).

Organizational Job Retention Factors: Organizational job retention factors in this study included in the questionnaire sent to county Extension agents are opportunities for advancement, variety of work, office environment, quality of support staff, recognition from supervisor, understanding of supervisor, task repetitiveness, benefits/retirement, salary, support of Extension specialist, job security, direct supervisor checks on work performance, training, top down programming.

Individual Non-Work Job Retention Factors: The individual non-work related factors included in the questionnaire sent to county Extension agents are opportunities for personal growth and development, opportunities for outside employment, status in the community, interaction with community leaders, opportunity to contribute to the community, personal obligation/work obligations, secondary education, time with family.

Individual Work-Related Job Retention Factors: The individual work-related job retention factors included in the questionnaire sent to county Extension agents are workload, interesting work, opportunities to travel, recognition, professional development, flexible hours, personal satisfaction, professional relationships, challenging work, opportunities to work with own children in the program, involvement in organizational decisions, job requirements, nights/weekends/overnight requirements, job requirements/expectations.

CHAPTER II

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Introduction

This chapter reviews relevant literature that provided background for this research. Specific areas of literature included: agent retention and turnover, human motivation and satisfaction. The roles of county Extension agents are discussed to outline work responsibilities. Agent retention and turnover are discussed to establish the impact of turnover and the importance of agent retention. Motivation and satisfaction theories are included in this chapter to describe attitude and effectiveness of county Extension Agents. The effectiveness of Extension is dependent upon the motivation of its employees (Chesney, 1992; Buford, 1990; Smith, 1990).

Theory

The decision process by which employees decide to leave their current job is complex. Numerous studies and journal articles have been completed with various opinions and data about turnover as well as retention. In this chapter a review of the body of literature is reported and will focus on Mobley's (1982) definition of turnover as the cessation of membership in an organization by an individual who received monetary compensation from that organization. The approach taken by the researcher in reviewing the literature four phased. Initially, a review of literature will be presented based upon a

progression and development of the work of March and Simon (1958). Next, Prices (1977) individual turnover studies will be reviewed and groundwork laid for the conceptual model chosen for this study, Mobley's simplified model of causes and correlates of turnover. The third phase will be satisfaction and motivation research reviews. Lastly, Extension-related turnover and retention studies will be reviewed and summarized.

Models of Turnover Based on the Work of March and Simon's Theory

The foundation for this study and many theories on voluntary turnover refer back to March and Simons (1958) Process Model of Turnover. March and Simon (1958) focused on two variables: 1) perceived ease of movement and job availability and 2) desirability of movement or dissatisfaction level with the current job. This belief is based on an individual's evaluating the factors involved in perceived ease of movement and perceived desirability of movement and then deciding to stay or leave. They also identified some personal factors affecting the ease of movement (Mowbray, 2002). March and Simon (1958) suggested three factors related to perceived desirability of movement: a) the greater the conformity of the job characteristics and self-characterization held by the individual, the greater the level of satisfaction, b) the greater the predictability of instrumental relationships on of the job, the higher the level of satisfaction, and c) the greater the compatibility of work requirements with other roles, the higher the level of satisfaction (Mobley, 1982).

Models of Turnover Based on the Work of Price

The work of March and Simon (1958) impacted Price (1977) who published a model of the determinants and intervening variables associated with turnover called the Causal Model of Turnover. Price (1977) proposed a) higher pay levels, b) participation in primary groups, c) communication of the nature and expectations of the job, d) communication within the organization as determinants leading to reduced turnover. The fundamental hypothesis of the Price model is that dissatisfaction results in turnover only when opportunity is relatively high-when there is an interaction between determinants and opportunity (Rousan, 1995).

Model of Turnover Based on the Work of Mobley

Mobley (1977) used March and Simon (1958) to develop a model of turnover as a decision process, which goes beyond a simple satisfaction-turnover relationship (Mowbray, 2002). Mobley (1977) suggested that there are intermediate linkages or “withdrawal conditions” in the turnover process elicited by job dissatisfaction. Some of these variables are: intention to quit or stay, thinking of quitting, and intentions to search. There is an order to these and the last step is the intention to stay/quit variable. Mobley (1982) states that research on this model supports the hypothesis that intentions are the best predictors of turnover and that the other variables do not add to the predictability of turnover. Mobley developed another model in which there were multiple causes and correlates of turnover that contribute either directly, indirectly, causally, or correlationally (Mowbray, 2002). This model provides four classes of

turnover factors or determinants: a) the state of the economy, b) organizational variables, c) individual factors (work related), d) and non-work related factors (Mobley, 1982).

The Mobley simplified model of causes and correlates of turnover has four factor categories -- external economy, organizational factors, individual work-related and individual non-work related factors. Each part plays a role in describing turnover. Focusing on any one of them will lead to an incomplete understanding of turnover according to Mobley (1982). The first determinant, state of the economy, is comprised of external factors, such as availability of jobs and unemployment levels (Chandler, 2005). Organizational factors including the size of the organization, rewards system, job design, supervisory style, pay, job content and work environment make up the second determinant (Chandler, 2005; Mowbray, 2002). Additional organizational job content factors such as the routine nature of jobs and task repetitiveness are important considerations. Price (1977) indicates there is a negative relationship between job routinization or task repetitiveness and turnover. Porter and Steers (1973) found support for a positive relationship between task repetitiveness and turnover and a negative relationship between autonomy, responsibility and turnover. Individual factors are separated into two determinants: work related and non-work related. Individual work related factors consist of age, job values, expectations, and abilities of the individual (Chandler, 2005). Non-work related factors are the last of Mobley's simplified model of causes and correlates of turnover (Mowbray, 2002). These factors consist of spousal career, family considerations, leisure preference of the individual, marital status, number of children, and age of children (Chandler, 2005; Mowbray, 2002).

Satisfaction and Motivation

The Hawthorne Studies began the human relations approach to management, whereby the needs and motivation of employees become the primary focus of managers (Bedeian, 1993). Understanding what motivated employees and how they were motivated was the focus of many researchers following the publication of the Hawthorne Study results (Terpstra, 1979). Motivation helps human actions and behaviors to cope within a changing environment (Arnold, 2007; Heckhausen, 1991). Motivation has been defined as: the psychological process that gives behavior purpose and direction (Kreitner, 1995); a predisposition to behave in a purposive manner to achieve specific, unmet needs (Buford, Bedeian, & Lindner, 1995); an internal drive to satisfy an unsatisfied need (Higgins, 1994); and the will to achieve (Bedeian, 1993). Hoppcock (1935) defined job satisfaction as any combination of psychological, physiological, and environmental circumstances that cause a person to express job satisfaction. Career retention factors cited by agents include a flexible work schedule, the satisfaction derived from educating clientele and enjoyment of the teaching and learning process.

Satisfaction can be defined as the discrepancy between actual accomplishment and expectation of reward (Kelly, 1980). Herzberg, Mausner, and Synderman (1959) claimed that one of the major reasons for measuring job satisfaction is to answer the question, "What does the worker want from his/her job?" and the answer to this question will assist management in discovering new methods of motivating employees. Herzberg's (1968) Motivation-Hygiene Theory illustrates how job satisfaction and dissatisfaction operate separately from one another. The Motivation-Hygiene Theory

differentiates between motivating and maintenance influences in the workplace (Herzberg, et al, 1959). These factors are not opposites, but rather they are separate components. Motivation is categorized into two factors: motivators and hygiene. Factors that produce job satisfaction are labeled motivators and factors that prevent job dissatisfaction are labeled hygienes (Buford, et al., 1995). Buford, et al. (1995) provided a summary of this theory: (a) the degree to which motivators are present in a job, motivation will occur; when absent, motivators do not lead to dissatisfaction, and (b) the degree to which hygienes are absent from a job, dissatisfaction will occur: when present, they prevent dissatisfaction but do not lead to satisfaction.

March and Simon (1958) focused on two variables: 1) perceived ease of movement or job availability; and 2) perceived desirability of movement or job dissatisfaction. According to this theory, employee resignations increase as job availability and job dissatisfaction increase. Mowbray (2002) and Chandler (1980) found employee satisfaction with the workplace is directly related to employee perception of the organization's functions and responsibilities, as well as the employees' role.

According to Skaggs (2008), when asking former and currently employed Extension agents, both groups stated the characteristics of the profession that provided the most satisfaction, including interaction with people, sharing information and solving problems, continuing education offered, support from coworkers and job flexibility. When Skaggs (2008) asked what characteristics lead to job dissatisfaction, the responses of former and current Extension agents were also similar with a few exceptions. Former

Extension agents listed night and weekend work, trying to balance work and family, uncertainty regarding job responsibilities, paperwork, and lack of support at the county level. Other studies have linked job satisfaction and retention to an agent's ability to balance work and family life (Ensle, 2005; Fetsch & Kennington, 1997; Place & Jacob, 2001; Riggs & Beus, 1993). The factors leading to job dissatisfaction from current Extension agents included night and weekend work, trying to balance work and family, paperwork, too many trainings, the promotion process, and uncertainty regarding job responsibilities (Skaggs, 2008). The issues of job stress, time management, and balancing one's personal and professional life are prevalent problems in extension today (Place & Jacob, 2001).

Bowen, Radhakrishna, and Keyser (1994) found significant relationships between job satisfaction and commitment to cooperative Extension, concluding that one does not exist without the other. So why is satisfaction or the study of satisfaction of employees relevant? Martin & Kaufman (2013) state the importance of studying organizational commitment and job satisfaction is that organizations depending on positive relationships with clientele and co-workers cannot afford to have employees who are not committed to the organization and who leave after only a short amount of time on the job. Mueller, Boyer, Price, and Iverson (1994) suggest that when employees are both satisfied with their jobs and committed to the organization, the bond with the organization will be strengthened and will result in greater cooperation and a reduced likelihood of quitting. Employees with a high job satisfaction care more about the quality of their work and, therefore are more committed to their organization (Scott,

2004). Commitment is an outward expression of a teacher or agent's psychological attachment to the profession, motivation, willingness to learn, and belief in making a difference in the learning and achievement of students (Sammons, Day, Kington, Gu, Stobart & Smees, 2007).

One should note that teachers' personal lives are intimately linked to their professional lives (Day, 2008). The multiple roles assumed by educators (e.g. guide, friend, coach, surrogate parent, teacher, spouse, parent) influence both the professional life and the personal life (Flores & Day, 2006).

The work of Martin and Kaufman (2013) reinforced the work of Ensle (2005), suggesting that Extension agents were moderately satisfied with their jobs, colleagues, and Extension in general. This is important as Strong and Harder (2009) found that job satisfaction was an important motivator for agents to remain employed in Extension, and findings from their study show strong relationships between job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and intent to quit. Ingram (2006) provided data showing direct connection between interpersonal relationships in the workplace and self-identity, and job performance and satisfaction. Linder, (1998) found the chief motivational influence for Extension employees was an appealing occupation. If administrators can identify factors that point to satisfaction or serve as motivation there is an opportunity to decrease turnover.

Extension Turnover

Employee turnover is important to organizations, individuals, and society (Mobley 1982). Turnover in Extension is nothing new, Whaples (1983). Mobley's (1982) definition of turnover is the cessation of membership in an organization by an individual who received monetary compensation from that organization. Rossano (1985) referred to turnover in a similar manner: turnover refers to the voluntary termination of participation in employment or pressured voluntary withdrawal, by an individual who received monetary compensation from the organization. It is important to note that this study does not include or discuss county Extension agents who move due to promotion, transfer, reassignment, or other internal movement within the organization. Kutilek (2000) shared "turnover rates have remained about 7% for the total Extension staff, and 5% for Extension agents." However for this study focus will be solely on county Extension agents, and it does not include volunteers, specialist, administration, student workers, interns, or program assistants. Lastly, this study will focus on a specific type of employment cessation. Employee-initiated cessation being voluntary separation from AgriLife Extension will be our targeted audience. This study will not take into consideration those involuntary separations such as organization-initiated (layoff, firing), death, or retirement. Price and Mueller (1986) stated that there is little managers can do about layoffs, retirements, and death so it is natural for managers to focus on actions and costs which are somewhat controllable. Administration can do more to manage voluntary separations than they can for involuntary separations.

The Impact of turnover is especially apparent in educational organizations like Extension, where the bulk of the organizational production system is dependent upon its employees (Clark, 1981). Extension agents develop and adapt programs to assist local people in identifying and solving problems. Rousan and Henderson (1996) state the most effective programs are developed after the professional grasps an understanding of the needs and resources of the local community. Anytime an established county agent voluntarily leaves a position, there is an interruption in programming. Even if a tenured agent is the replacement, it will take time to learn the local community, identify key leaders, learn local issues and become effective. Employee departures cause financial and time strains on the organization (Kutilek, 2000). The pressure includes the disruption of clientele services, interruption of Extension programming, additional time and money to recruit and train new agents, and extra workload on the remaining staff (Clark, 1992).

To ensure high levels of job satisfaction, administrators need to know and understand what their employees want from work in order to develop a better in-service training programs designed to enhance job satisfaction and reduce job dissatisfaction (Scott, 2004). Mobley (1982) said that from an organizational perspective, employee turnover can represent a significant cost in terms of lost recruiting, training, socialization investments, disruption and replacement cost, and a variety of indirect cost. What is clear from studies of the cost of turnover is that turnover is expensive (Mobley, 1982). It is costly to replace workers because of the productivity losses when someone leaves a job, the costs of hiring and training a new employee, and the slower productivity until

the new employee gets up to speed in the new job (Boushey & Glynn, 2012). They also state that maintaining a stable workforce by reducing employee turnover through better benefits and flexible workplace policies also makes good business sense, as it can result in significant cost savings to employees.

From a cost perspective, research (Kutilek, 2000) shows that a 1-percentage-point increase in the overall retention rate of Extension agents nationwide (80 agents x \$80,000 agent replacement cost) could reduce organizational expenses by \$6.4 million dollars annually. An Ohio State University study reported net costs for annual staff departures cost \$80,000 in replacement and salary expenses (Rousan, 1995). When Extension agents leave the organization, there is a reduction in organizational effectiveness, administrative efforts are increased to replace the departed agent; there is a reduced availability in overall funds, which leads to a scarcity of resources to hire and train capable employees (Rousan & Henderson, 1996). A public or private organization may spend as much as 150% of the employee's salary to hire another individual (Friedman, Galinsky, & Plowden, 1992). Chandler (2005) estimated it could cost Extension from \$7,185 to \$30,000 to replace an agent who had an annual salary of \$30,000. This is a significant problem for Cooperative Extension nationally, as increased burnout and staff turnover are monetarily expensive and an inefficient use of time management (Ensle, 2005). Mobley (1982) states calculating turnover cost is complicated. It is more than monetary, as it is a systematic effort to evaluate direct and indirect costs. Recruitment, replacement cost, original cost, testing, training or learning cost, even return on the human-resource investment has to be considered. Mobley goes

into more detail, as there should be a cost associated with the disruption of the social and communication patterns that occur during turnover. According to Mobley, turnover can have negative effects on those remaining that go beyond additional workload and possible performance decline. Mobley (1982) follows that point with a corollary: turnover may negatively affect the attitude of those that remain. One aspect of turnover that Mobley states is that surprisingly few companies systematically assess the performance of leavers. It is a positive organizational consequence if poor performers are replaced with better performers. Workplace policies that improve employee retention can help companies reduce their turnover cost (Boushey & Glynn, 2012). There is a need to review why agents leave employment with Extension. A plan to reduce turnover and increase retention rates of these employees needs to be developed.

Now with that said, Mobley (1982) stated that employee turnover can have positive organizational benefits via, for example, displacement of poor performers, creation of promotion opportunities, and infusion of new people with new ideas. Mobley (1982) list seven fundamental points about employee turnover, four of which apply to Extension: 1). Turnover can have positive and negative implications for individuals, their careers, and their self-concept. It affects the “stayers” and the “leavers.” 2). Turnover is potentially costly, and organizations need to document these costs carefully. 3). Turnover can have positive organizational implications. It can for example, create opportunities for promotion, infusing new ideas and technology, and displace poor performers. 4). Lack of turnover can create its own set of problems, such

as blocking career-development paths, entrenching dated methods, and accumulating poor performers.

There have been numerous studies pertaining to why county Extension agents choose to leave employment with Extension. One of the earliest studies of turnover in Extension was conducted by McNeely (1948) in Minnesota. In 1983, Whaples noted that “Poor morale, job dissatisfaction, burnout, and agent turnover continue to plague Extension in many states.” Church and Pals (1982) studied why Idaho Extension agents left the organization and identified high incidences of required work activities during evenings and weekends as a major reason. St. Pierre (1984) suggested that Extension agent turnover may be related to the highly absorptive nature of the agent role that may result in a lower quality of family life. Manton and Van Es (1985) investigated employee turnover in Illinois and came to the conclusion that alternative reward structures and stronger formal and informal employee networks were warranted. Hebert and Kotrlik (1990) studied Extension agents’ spouses’ satisfaction level and noted that direct correlations exist between spousal satisfaction and variables such as salary, stress level, and number of hours worked. Rousan and Henderson (1996) identified “other priorities in their lives, other job offers, insufficient pay for the amount of work performed, family obligations, too many late night meetings, too many work responsibilities, and attraction to more money elsewhere” as common reasons for agent turnover in Ohio. As illustrated in their model in Figure 1, Extension agents are voluntarily leaving the organization due to a variety of organizational, individual work, and individual non-work related factors. Skaggs (2008) identified salary, time away from family/family problems, lack of

leadership and support from County Coordinators, returning to school for advanced degrees, time demand on new agents, unrealistic expectations/frustration as the most significant factors leading to resignation. In 2000, Kutilek identified job stress, low pay, and lack of supervisory support as the top reasons contributing to agents' departure. According to ECOP (2005), low salaries, staff cuts, downsizing, and aging faculty are causing agents to leave. Kutilek, Gunderson, and Conklin (2002) also found that high quality agents are leaving due to organizational factors, non-work related factors, and individual related factors.

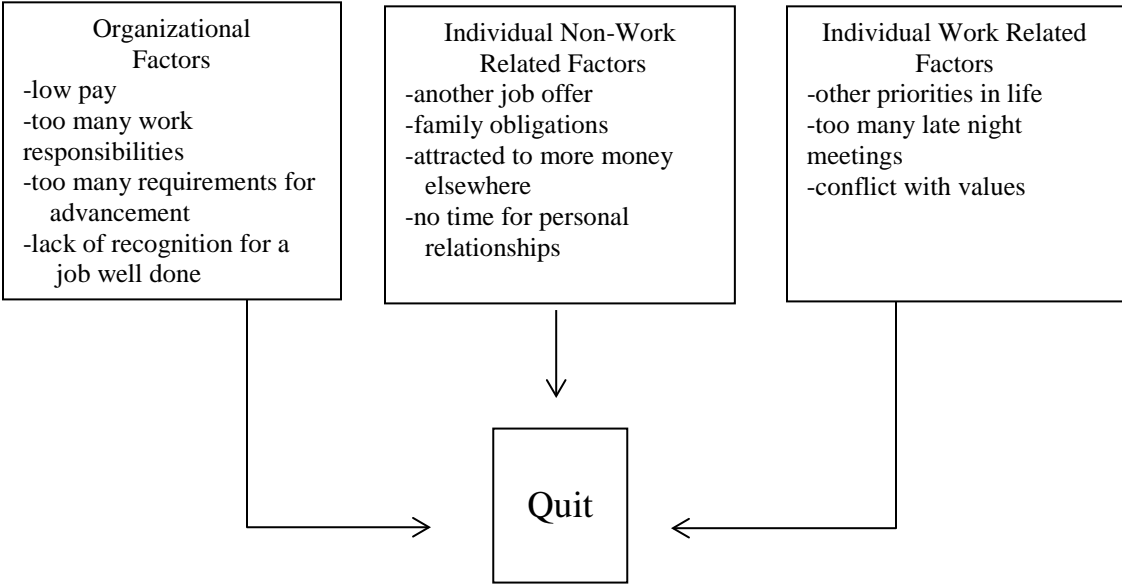


Figure 1. A Model of Voluntary Turnover of OSU Extension Agents

Other studies have linked job satisfaction and retention to an agent's ability to balance work and family life (Enсле, 2005; Fetsch & Kennington, 1997; Place & Jacob, 2001;

Riggs & Beus, 1993). Branham (2005) proposed there are seven hidden reasons why employees decide to leave a job, including: the job or workplace was not as expected; the mismatch between job and person; too little coaching and feedback; too few growth and advancement opportunities; feeling devalued and unrecognized; stress from overwork and work-life imbalance; and loss of trust and confidence in senior leaders. According to Chandler (2005) the actual causes of turnover in organizations are generally attributed to four classes of determinants: economy, organizational, individual work, and non-work related. The first determinant from Chandler's study is economy, which is comprised of external factors. An example of external factors would be job availability or unemployment level. The second determinant is made up of organizational factors. Examples are supervisory style, pay, job content, reward system, and work environment compromise. The individual work factors refer to job values, expectations, and abilities of the individual. The last determinant is individual non-work factors such as a spouse's career, family considerations, and leisure preferences of the individual employee.

Extension Retention

Extension programs depend on cooperation between state Extension specialists, County Extension Agents, volunteer leaders, and program participants but the catalyst for these programs is the Extension Agent (Decker, 1979). The Extension Committee on Organization and Policy's Leadership Advisory Council of the National Association of State Universities and Land-Grant Colleges identified agent retention as a major

challenge facing Cooperative Extension nationally (ECOP LAC, 2005; Safrit & Owen, 2010). To be effective, managers need to understand what motivates employees within the context of the roles they perform. The manager must be able to diagnose the nature and probable determinants of turnover in his/her organization(s); assess the probable individual and organizational consequences of the various types of turnover; design and implement policies, practices, and programs for effectively dealing with turnover; evaluate the effectiveness of change; and anticipate further changes required to effectively reduce turnover in a dynamic world (Mobley, 1982). Barnett and Louderback (1971) stated that when organizations such as the Extension Service change, administrators must analyze clientele needs and determine effective organizational changes necessary to meet those needs. Long and Swortzel (2007) suggest that administrators must also be aware of the effect that any anticipated change might have on the job satisfaction of the extension staff. Mobley (1982) suggested that the effective management of turnover requires examination of the entire human resource management process, including retirement, selection, early socialization, job design, compensation, supervision, career planning, working conditions and schedules. Kutilek, Conklin, and Gunderson (2002) comment on the need for Extension systems to address work/life issues so as to better retain quality employees facing increased personal, familial, and professional demands upon their time. Chandler (2005) said that turnover does not only affect the business as an organization, but the individual or the employee is affected personally as well. These skilled and knowledgeable agents reflect the integrity and reputation of Extension (Arnold and Place, 2010a). Administrators and directors must

constantly be engaged and responsive to agents' ever-changing work related needs (Conklin, Hook, Kielbaugh, & Nieto, 2002). The success of Extension programming depends on members at the local level who will carry out the organization's mission. Of all the functions a manager performs, motivating employees is arguably the most complex (Lindner, 1998). Studies (Ramlall, 2003) show that 86% of employers experience difficulty attracting new employees and 58% experience difficulty retaining their employees. This is due, in part, to the fact that what motivates employees changes constantly (Bowen & Radhakrishna, 1991). Research has shown that commitment to the organization and job satisfaction are important contributors to employee retention and reduced intent to quit (Martin & Kaufman, 2013). Organizational commitment has been defined as a psychological link between the employee and the employing organization that make it less likely that the employee will voluntarily leave the organization (Allen & Meyer, 1996). Skaggs (2008) found varied answers in his research from questioning former and current Extension employees for recommendations to Extension administration to retain employees. Former Extension agents made the following recommendations: increase salaries, provide better leadership/support at the county level, training on how to better balance family and work, and have a more effective mentoring program. The currently employed Agents recommended: reinforcing the current mentoring program and creating an internship program providing good leadership and being more engaged with Agents, reducing out-of-county travel for new agents, and streamlining the hiring process. By sharing strategies from successful agents, Extension can improve the success rate, reduce the stress level, reduce the

burnout, and reduce the turnover rate of county extension agents while ultimately saving Extension money and improving stakeholder relationships (Enslie, 2005; Safrit & Owen, 2010; Saunders & Reese, 2011; Sears, Urizar & Evans, 2011; Strong & Harder, 2009). Herzberg (1968) proposed that administrators must make sure that employee salaries and other maintenance factors are sufficient. If they are not, the employees will leave the organization. This job enrichment consists of constructing motivators within the position by making it more appealing and stimulating (Herzberg, 1968; Strong and Harder, 2009). Martin and Kaufman (2013) suggest low job satisfaction is a strong predictor of intent to quit. Organizations should consider giving attention to human resource practices such as recruitment and hiring, benefits and compensation, training and development, along with evaluation and supervision, as they seek to improve the job satisfaction of employees in the organization. Herzberg (Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, 2010) reasoned that because the factors causing satisfaction are different from those causing dissatisfaction, the two feelings cannot simply be treated as opposites of one another. The opposite of satisfaction is not dissatisfaction, but rather, *no* satisfaction. Similarly, the opposite of dissatisfaction is *no* dissatisfaction. Herzberg argued that there are two distinct human needs portrayed. First, there are needs that can be fulfilled by money, for example, to purchase food and shelter. Second, there is the the need to achieve and grow, and this need is fulfilled by activities that cause one to grow. Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory (2010) referred to these hygiene factors as the process of providing incentives or a threat of punishment to cause someone to do something. Herzberg (1966) coined the term *job enrichment* — the process of

redesigning work in order to build in motivators by increasing both the variety of tasks that an employee performs and the control over those tasks. This simply means there is an increase in the number of tasks that an employee performs. Another way of thinking of this is that a variety of tasks are performed to reduce boredom, rather than overloading a person with too many tasks. This could also be an important concept in regards to job responsibilities. This becomes even more important when we look at management (Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, 2010) not only must provide hygiene factors to avoid employee dissatisfaction, but also must provide factors intrinsic to the work itself in order for employees to be satisfied with their jobs.

Understanding the relationships between job embeddedness and retention within the Extension agent population could assist administrators in formalizing policies and procedures which capitalize on the organization's strengths (Young, Stone, Aliaga, & Shuck, 2013). Job embeddedness is defined as the on and off-the-job factors associated with individual links, fit, and sacrifice (Mitchell, Holtom, Lee, Sablinski, & Erez, 2001). Along with embeddedness goes engagement of employees. Engagement is "a positive, fulfilling, work-related state of mind" (Schaufeli, Salanova, Gonzalez-Roma, & Bakker, 2002). Employee engagement is positively related to beneficial outcomes such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and organizational citizenship behaviors, and is negatively related to detrimental outcomes, such as turnover intentions (Saks, 2006) and burnout (Schaufeli, et al., 2002). At the organizational level, employee engagement has been shown to predict organizational success and financial performance (Harter, Schmidt, & Hayes, 2002). There have been multiple models and systems discussed,

proposed and implemented. Safrit and Owen (2010) developed the R.E.T.A.I.N.S. conceptual model for retaining county Extension program professionals, and suggested practical implications of the model: Recruit authentically; Expand on new employees' experiences and abilities; Train, train, train; Advocate for both the employee and the position; Inspire, invest in, and empower employees; Nurture connectivity among the employees; and Show appreciation through effective recognition. Strong and Harder (2009) suggest Extension programming would have greater continuity if there were a lower rate of agent turnover.

According to Brodeur, Higgins, Gonzalez, Craig and Hale (2011), voluntary personnel turnover occurs for a multitude of reasons including lack of proper “on-boarding.” AgriLife Extension introduced a new on-boarding system in 2009 to address turnover. Dromgoole (2013) found that agent turnover within AgriLife Extension had increased every year (from 26 to 38 in 2009-2010, 38 to 43 in 2010-2011, 43 to 47 in 2011-2012) and in 2013 was at its highest level with sixty-one non-retirement separations. As summarized by Dromgoole and Ballabina (2013), the learning components of this on-boarding system include:

- District Extension Administrator Orientation Agendas that provide core teaching points.
- Regional Program Director Orientation Agendas that provide core teaching points.
- 4-H Specialist Orientation Agendas that provide core teaching points.

- An On-boarding continuum that provides a road map for on-boarding new agents.
- Online learning modules that provide agents with an introduction of Extension program management topics.
- Extension Foundations that replace New Employee Orientation and provides experiential learning experience for new agents related to program development, subject matter program management, 4-H livestock project management, and reporting and accountability.
- Excellence in Programming Academy that provides new agents with in-depth experiential learning experiences related to program planning, teaching effectiveness, program implementation, and evaluation and interpretation.
- The Texas AgriLife Extension Service Mentoring Program.
- First Step Program.
- Extension Fundamentals letter series designed to reinforce topics covered during orientations; face-to-face trainings and online modules.
- Revised New Agent Self-Study Guide.

Dromgoole and Ballabina (2013) stated “This level of turnover combined with the relatively yearly juncture when agents are leaving AgriLife Extension, dis-satisfaction expressed by agents regarding on-boarding, and negative results of a recent evaluation of new employees related to on-boarding suggests that our field management should be re-emphasizing our on-boarding procedures to ensure we are executing our system effectively” (p. 1). AgriLife Extension proposed a renewed emphasis on on-boarding

which includes mentoring, to “operationalize this systematic more sequential on-boarding process.” Strong and Harder (2009) concluded “.....a mentoring program was identified as important in retaining and training of employees” (p. 4). The goal of Mentoring in Extension is to provide a professional, educational and personal support system for new employees of AgriLife Extension or the Prairie View A&M Cooperative Extension Program (“Mentoring in extension,” 2008). Each new employee and certain newly promoted employees will benefit from the guidance of an appointed mentor. According to Bell (2002), a mentor is someone who helps another learn something that he or she would have learned less well, more slowly, or not at all if left alone.

If you discuss retention of employees you must also include rehiring of former employees. There are a number of county Extension agents who leave Extension for other job opportunities. According to Polevoi (2013) there are benefits of rehiring as “specialist estimates that you can potentially save \$15,000 to \$20,000 per hire “in lower cost-per-hire, faster productivity, and higher retention rate.” Retention not only refers to keeping existing employees it can also include the rehiring of former employees.

The benefits gained by investing in Extension’s current employees may ultimately enhance Extension’s ability to fulfill its mission as the educational outreach branch of the land-grant university (Strong & Harder, 2009). Cooperative Extension must deliver relevant, high-quality programs that, in turn, help improve the lives of clients (Ladewig, 1999). There are opportunities for county Extension agents in Texas to be promoted during their careers. Among these promotion opportunities are the options of transferring to a more demanding, higher level county, promotion to an administrative

position, pursuing an advanced degree, as well as advancement up the career ladder (Fehlis & Willis, 2001). All of these promotion procedures offer the opportunity for salary enhancement.

CHAPTER III

METHODS OF INVESTIGATION

Overview of the Study

The purpose of this study was to determine the organizational and individual factors related to job retention of Texas county agents employed with AgriLife Extension and to identify factors involved in the decision to stay employed. The findings in this research may serve as an aid for administrators to enhance future agent retention.

Research Design

This study is a modified version of Rousan (1995), Mowbray (2002), and Chandler (2005) utilizing Mobley's simplified model of causes and correlates of turnover. Most previous studies of turnover in Cooperative Extension Service have focused on the employee's intention to leave the organization. This study does not seek to predict turnover, but to determine why agents choose to stay employed with Extension. By using Mobley's simplified model of causes and correlates of turnover, these reasons can be examined as 1) organizational – those the organization has an influence over, 2) individual non-work related factors – those personal factors which the organization has no influence over, and 3) personal factors which influence job satisfaction.

There are four primary objectives to this study: 1) Describe the demographics as

related to factors among county Extension agents' who choose to remain employed with Extension. 2) Determine the factors that contribute to agents choosing to remain employed with Extension under the categories of dependent (organizational, work and non-work individual factors) and independent (demographics) variables. 3) Identify patterns and define relationships between factors that contribute to retention of County Extension Agents. 4) Identify patterns and themes that can be used as predictors of why County Extension Agents choose to remain employed with Extension. In objective two the dependent and independent variables are mentioned. The dependent variables are:

- Organizational: factors which the organization alone can influence (opportunity to advance, variety of work, office environment, quality of support staff, recognition from supervisor, understanding of supervisor, task repetitiveness, benefits/retirement, salary, support of Extension specialist, job security, direct supervisor, training, top down programming).
- Individual Work-Related: factors related to perception and performance which directly or indirectly affect satisfaction with the job. (workload, interesting work, opportunity to travel, recognition, professional development, flexible hours, personal satisfaction, professional relationships, challenging work, opportunities to work with your own children, involvement in organizational decisions, job requirements, nights/weekends/overnight requirements, job expectations/responsibilities).
- Individual Non-Work Related: factors that are personal or non-work related which influence the individual's commitment to the job. (opportunities for

personal growth and development, opportunities for outside employment, status in the community, interaction with community leaders, opportunity to contribute to the community, personal obligations vs work obligations, secondary education, time with family).

The independent variables were Demographic, such as: Position/title, years of employment, population of county served, current Dossier level, advanced along Dossier, advanced along what levels, age, marital status, number of children, education level, Extension first career choice, served in multiple counties, how many counties served, thought about leaving Extension, left Extension and rehired, applied for another job.

These variable categories facilitate understanding of whether the organization *can* influence, *may be able* to influence or *cannot* influence the agent turnover. This knowledge will provide the administration of AgriLife Extension another tool that can be used to develop strategies to most effectively deal with turnover.

IRB approval of this research effort was granted on July 17, 2014. The approval letter is appears in Appendix A.

Population

The target population for this data was collected from 560 current county extension agents employed with AgriLife Extension as of May 1, 2014. A census of the target population of all county Extension agents (Gall et al., 2006) employed in Texas was taken. The census method of collecting data was utilized due to the population

being heterogeneous in nature. The listing of agents was secured from AgriLife Extension. The agents included in this study have the following job titles: Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Science, 4-H and Youth Development, Coastal Marine Agent, Natural Resource, Urban Youth Development, County Extension Director, and Horticulture. A census

Instrumentation

Collection of data through self-administered electronic surveys by e-mail and web are shown to provide an excellent response rate in survey methodology (Dillman, Smyth, & Christian, 2009). Sheehan and McMillan (1999) estimated that, in studies where both mail and e-mail were used to deliver surveys, mail surveys took 11.8 days to return and e-mail surveys were returned in 7.6 days. A web-based questionnaire was used to collect data for this study and the link to complete the survey was emailed out to the target population. The questionnaire was adapted from a previous instrument utilized in a study of county Extension agent turnover by Rousan (1995); in a study of Ohio State University Extension System, and then for the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service (Mowbray, 2002) and a later study on agent retention in Texas Cooperative Extension (Chandler, 2005). The questions were modified to reflect why agents choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension. The researcher used a Likert-type scale to measure attitudes, knowledge, perceptions, values, and behavior changes. A Likert-type scale involves a series of statements that respondents may choose in order to rate their responses to evaluate questions (Vogt, 1999). Twenty-two

questions using Likert-type scales (1=strongly disagree, 2=disagree, 3=neutral, 4=agree, and 5=strongly agree) were administered. The mean range of scores was interpreted as: 1.0-1.5=strongly disagree, 1.51-2.50=disagree, 2.51-3.50=neutral, 3.51-4.50=agree, and 4.51-5.00=strongly agree. The instrument was divided into four sections: thirteen organization factors with one open ended question, twelve individual work related factors with one open ended question, seven individual non-work related factors with one open ended question, and seventeen demographic questions with two open ended questions. Some examples of the organizational factors include: opportunities for promotion or advancement, variety of work/schedule, quality of support staff, and benefit/retirement packages. Among the twelve individual work-related factors were: workload, opportunities for professional development, personal satisfaction, and the opportunity to be creative through challenging work. The seven individual non-work related factors included: opportunities for personal growth and development, opportunity for outside business or financial interest, professional status in the community, opportunity to know and interact with key community leaders, and the opportunity to contribute to my community. The questionnaire is included in Appendix B.

Validity

Subject characteristics, location, instrumentation, testing, and mortality were viewed as potential threats to interval validity in this study (Fraenkel & Wallen, 2006.) Implementation, history, maturation, attitude of subjects, and regression are not applicable to a correlational study because no intervention occurs. Content validity of

the questionnaire was established by a panel of Extension administrators, including: District Extension Administrators, Regional Program Leaders, County Extension Directors, Associate Directors, Executive Associate Directors and Director. The following points were used to examine the questionnaire: item content and clarity, wording, length of the instrument, format, and overall appearance.

Data Collection

The data for this study was collected through county Extension agents who completed a web-based questionnaire. To obtain the best response rate from the web-based questionnaire, the Hardin-Brashears Bi-Modal method (Fraze, Hardin, Brashears, Haygood, & Smith, 2003) was utilized. Procedures to be followed are in accordance with accepted guidelines for mail surveys as suggested in Dillman, Smyth, and Christian (2009) prescription of five contacts to achieve the highest possible response rate. The first contact consisted of a pre-notice email to the county Extension agents informing them of the study and its purpose. This email also explained the importance of their participation in the study. Four days later the second contact, email delivery of the actual questionnaire link was distributed, and the web-based survey used as the mode of collecting data. This email included information about the research study, its overall purpose, an explanation that participation is voluntary, a confidentiality statement and an explanation of how the data will be utilized. Seven days following the delivery of the questionnaire notification, a third contact was made, a simple reminder note sent to thank those who completed the survey and as a reminder to those who have not

responded to do so at their earliest convenience. The thirteenth day, a fourth contact was made as another reminder and thank you. Nineteen days later, the fifth and final contact was made through an email notice to all county Extension agents. To ensure confidentiality data was collected via an online questionnaire utilizing the Qualtrics software program. Numbers were automatically assigned to returned surveys and data collected from the surveys to protect the privacy of the individuals. Participants completing the survey did so with confidentiality and no link can be made between individuals and responses. Any reference sheet assigning numbers to individual in the possession of the researcher and will be destroyed following the completion of the study. Agents are therefore assured of confidentiality throughout the data collection portion of the study and beyond. Only summary statistics, tables and unidentified quotes have been used and no information will be released which could be linked to individual extension agents.

The Qualtrics software was utilized because of its high security, program capabilities and ease of use. The online questionnaire was activated immediately after IRB approval and the population was notified by an email through Qualtrics from Dr. Susan Ballabina, Associate Director for Program Development, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. The final deadline to respond was 25 days after activation, and the online questionnaire was deactivated. The data collected was analyzed. A copy of the email notification of the online questionnaire activation and email reminders appears in Appendix C.

Data Analysis

SPSS 2014 software was used to analyze the data for this study. Descriptive statistics were used to summarize the data. Frequencies, percentages, central tendency measures, and variability are used to describe the data. Analysis of variance F-tests were utilized to predict the dependent variables with demographic factors with two or more choices (example: ethnicity) for reasons why county Extension agents choose to stay in Extension. The *t*-test is a statistical test used to predict the dependent variable with the independent variable with only two choices. In this research the independent two sample *t*-test was used to predict the dependent variable (organizational, individual work, and individual non-work factors) with the independent variables (demographic factors) with only two choices (example: men and women) for “reasons why County Extension Agents choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.” Multivariate analysis of variance was used when comparing multivariate (population) means of several groups. This is extremely important as it allowed me to make inferences about how changes in the group (independent variable) affect the dependent variable. An example: you can add or take away independent variables (ethnicity, years of experience, size of county) and see how the dependent variable (individual work and non-work factors) changes. Multiple regression analysis was used to allow the researcher to learn more about the relationship between several independent variables and a dependent variable. Multiple regression is used when we want to predict the value of a variable based on the value of two or more other variables. One of the measurement variables is the dependent (Y) variable. The rest of the variables are the independent (X)

variables. An example: In this study the dependent variable could be organizational factors and the independent variables could be (but not limited too) female, age, years of experience, number of children at home. This multiple regression can be done over a broad area of independent variables and a dependent variable to allow the researcher to answer the general question “what is the best predictor of why county Extension agents choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension?”

The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to assess the nature of the relationship between two variables when both variables are interval level (or ratio) measurements, with each variable assuming more than three values. Analysis of variance was used to predict the dependent variables (organization, individual work, and individual non-work factors) with demographic factors having two or more choices (example: ethnicity, age, years of experience) for inferring why county Extension agents choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension. Pearson product-moment correlation coefficients may range in size from -1.00 to +1.00. A coefficient of 0.00 indicates no relationship exists between two variables while a coefficient of -1.00 or +1.00 indicates a perfect negative or positive correlation. Davis (1971) developed a convention for describing relationships as follows:

- .70 or higher – very strong association
- .50 to .69 – substantial association
- .30 to .49 – moderate association
- .10 to .29 – low association
- .01 to .09 – negligible association

Correlation matrix and reliability were calculated using Cronbach's alpha.

Cronbach's alpha is an index of reliability associated with the variation accounting for the true score of the "underlying construct." Cronbach's alpha coefficient (also known as the coefficient alpha technique or alpha coefficient of reliability) is a test of reliability as internal consistency (Cronbach, 1951). According to Lund Research Limited (2012) it is also a versatile test of reliability as internal consistency because it can be used for attitudinal measurements, which are popular amongst undergraduate and master's level students (e.g., attitudinal measurements include Likert scales with options such as strongly agree, agree, neither agree nor disagree, disagree, strongly disagree). From organizational related variables, we have Cronbach's alpha of .825, which indicates a high level of internal consistency for our scale with this research. The individual work variables provide a Cronbach's alpha of .823, which also indicates a high level of internal consistency for our scale with this study. The individual non-work related variables show a Cronbach's alpha of .760, which indicates a high level of related variable internal consistency for our scale with this test. Construct is the hypothetical variable that is being measured (Hatcher, 1994). All observed variables, except demographics and open-ended items, were subjected to a Shapiro-Wilkes test (Royston, 1983) for normality and were found to have a normal distribution.

CHAPTER IV

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The four major research questions in this study focus on factors related to job retention of Texas county Extension agents and why they choose to remain employed with AgriLife Extension: 1) identify the demographic profiles of county Extension agents who choose to remain employed with Extension, 2) determine the factors that contribute to county Extension agents choosing to remain employed with Extension under the categories of dependent (organizational, work and non-work individual factors) and independent (demographic) variables, 3) identify patterns and define relationships between factors that contribute to retention of county Extension agents, 4) identify patterns and themes that can be used as predictors of why county Extension agents choose to remain employed with Extension. This chapter describes and analyzes the findings of the data collected from the survey administered to an official population of 560 Texas county Extension agents employed by AgriLife Extension as of July 24, 2014. The first section of this chapter provides a summary of the data collection process. The second section describes the personal and professional characteristics of those individuals who responded to the survey. The third section describes and analyzes the organizational, individual work-related and individual non-work related factors contributing to retention of the county Extension agents. The final section of this chapter presents patterns and themes related to retention, which emerged from the data collected from the Texas county Extension agents.

During the months of July and August, data was collected from an online survey emailed to the entire population of 560 county Extension agents employed by AgriLife Extension. The initial contact was made on July 24th with an invitation email. Included in this email was the description of the study purpose, confidential and voluntary declarations, the survey link and the survey close date. A second contact was made on July 28 thanking those who had completed the survey, and reminding those who had not to please do so. The third contact was made on July 31, again thanking the respondents, encouraging those who had not participated to please do so and reminding all that the survey was voluntary as well as confidential. The fourth contact was made on August 6 reminding the audience of the purpose and asking the target audience to complete the survey. The final and fifth contact was made on Aug 14 thanking everyone for completing the survey and reminding those who had not that the survey would close on August 15. The total response was 440 from the 560 county Extension agents, for a 78.5% response rate with all responses usable.

Results for Objective One

The first objective of this research was to identify the demographics as related to factors among county Extension agents who choose to remain employed with AgriLife Extension. As illustrated in Table 4, respondents were compared on the characteristics of Gender, Age, Marital Status, Number of Children, and Education Level. Of the 417 persons responding to the question of Gender, 210 (50.4%) were female, with 207 respondents being male (49.6%). Marital status asked whether married or single, with

72% (304) responding as married and 28% (118) being single. 296 (70.6%) persons indicated they had children with 123 (29.4%) stating they had none. Of those with children, 202 (48.2%) responded they have 1-2, 63 (15%) responded as having 2-3, and 31 (7.4%) replied they have 3 or more. Education level for our respondents breaks down as a Bachelor's degree held by 100 (23.9%) respondents, 299 (71.5%) holding a Master's degree, and 19 (4.5%) individuals have a Doctorate degree.

Table 4 *Gender, Age, Marital Status, Number of Children, and Education*

Characteristics	<i>N</i>	%
Gender		
Male	207	49.6
Female	210	50.4
Marital Status		
Married	304	72
Single	118	28
Age		
30 and younger	87	20.7
31-40	95	22.6
41-50	129	30.7
51 and older	109	26
Number of Children		
No Children	123	29.4
1-2 kids	202	48.2
2-3 kids	63	15
3 or > kids	31	7.4
Education Level (Degree)		
Bachelors	100	23.9
Masters	299	71.5
Doctorate	19	4.5

Table 5 provides the Position Title, Years of Employment, Current Dossier Level, Advance on Dossier Level, Last Advancement on Dossier. The position or job title from respondents is 48.7% (203) CEA-Ag, 32.6% (136) CEA-FCS, 12.2% (51) CEA - 4-H, 4.1% (17) CEA-Horticulture, 1.2% (5) CEA-Marine, .5% (2) for CEA-Urban Youth Development and .5% (2) for CEA-NR, and .2% (1) CEA-Director.

Four hundred twenty-four participants responded to the years of employment question, with 32.8% (139) being employed for 16-20 years, 27.8% (118) employed less than 3 years, 18.9% (80) employed for 6-10 years, 12% (51) respondents employed for 11-15 years, and 8.5% (36) for 3-5 years of employment.

Respondents were also asked to provide their current dossier level: 49.9% (206) level I, 23.7% (98) level II, 16.2% (67) at level III, and 10.2% or 42 persons at level IV. Dossier levels vary across Extension employment and applying for advancement is optional. Results from the study question “who has advanced on the dossier career track?”: 143 or 34.5% replied “Yes,” with 272 or 65.5% replying “No” they have not advanced on dossier level. The respondents who answered Yes to advancing on the dossier level were asked what was their last level advanced. Responses on last level advanced were: 38.3% (57) I to II, 36.9% (55) from level II to level III, and 24.8% advancing from level III to level IV.

Table 5 *Position, Years of Employment, Current Dossier Level, Advanced on Dossier Level, Last Advancement on Dossier*

Characteristics	<i>N</i>	%
Position		
CEA-Ag/NR	203	48.7
CEA-FCS	136	32.6
CEA-UYD	2	.5
CEA-Hort	17	4.1
CEA-Marine	5	1.2
CEA-NR	2	.5
CEA-4-H	51	12.2
CEA-D	1	.2
Years of Employment		
< 3 years	118	27.8
3 – 5 years	36	8.5
6 – 10 years	80	18.9
11 – 15 years	51	12
16 – 20 years	139	32.8
Current Dossier Level		
I	206	49.9
II	98	23.7
III	67	16.2
IV	42	10.2
Advanced on Dossier Level		
Yes	143	34.5
No	272	65.5
Last Adv. on Dossier Level		
I – II	57	38.3
II – III	55	36.9
III – IV	37	24.8

Demographics for county information were also recorded by individual respondents. Agents were asked Population of County, if they have Served in Multiple Counties, and Number of Counties Served, which is summarized in Table Six. 38.2 %

(162) work in a county with a population of 50,000 or greater; followed by 21% (89) working in counties of 20,001-50,000; 20% (85) are in counties of 2,001-10,000 population; and 3.5% (15) in counties with a population less than 2,000 people.

48.7% (203) have worked in multiple counties while 32.6% (136) have worked in the same county for their career. For respondents who have served in multiple counties the distribution is: 49.2% (118) serving 1-2 counties, 49.2% (118) in 3-5 counties, and 1.7% (4) in more than 5 counties.

Table 6 Population of County, Served in Multiple Counties, Number of Counties Served

Characteristics	<i>N</i>	%
Population of County		
< 2000	15	3.5
2001 – 10,000	85	20
10,001 – 20,000	73	17.2
20,001 – 50,000	89	21
50,000 or >	162	38.2
Served in Multiple Counties		
Yes	203	48.7
No	136	32.6
Number of Counties Served		
1 - 2	118	49.2
3 - 5	118	49.2
>5	4	1.7

Table 7 provides a career choice profile of agents who chose Extension as their first career choice, if they have thought about leaving Extension, if they left Extension and were rehired, if the agent had seriously thought about leaving Extension and finally, if the agent had actually applied for another job while employed with Extension. 46.2% (193) agents replied Extension was their first career choice, with 53.8% (225) responding Extension was not their first career choice.

300 (71.1%) respondents have thought about leaving Extension employment for another job opportunity and 122 (28.9%) have not.

371 (88.3%) individuals responded they have not left Extension and then been rehired whereas 49 (11.7%) individuals have left Extension, later to be rehired by Extension.

309 (74.5%) respondents have not applied for another job while employed with Extension but 25.5% or 106 individuals have done so.

Table 7 *Extension First Career Choice, Thought About Leaving Extension, Left Extension and Rehired, Have Applied for Another Job*

Characteristics	<i>N</i>	%
Extension First Career Choice		
Yes	193	46.2
No	225	53.8
Thought About Leaving Extension		
Yes	300	71.1
No	122	28.9
Left Extension and Rehired		
Yes	49	11.7
No	371	88.3
Have Applied for Another Job		
Yes	106	25.5
No	309	74.5

Results for Objective Two

The second objective of this study was to determine the factors that contributed to agents choosing to stay employed with AgriLife Extension under the broad determinant categories of organizational, individual work-related, and non-work related. This section of the survey utilized a Likert-type Scale (1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neither Agree or Disagree, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree). The Likert scale used in this study offers a statement, which the respondent is asked to evaluate

according to the level of agreement with the question “I choose to stay employed as a CEA with AgriLife Extension.” In Tables 13 Organizational Factors Contributing to Agents Choosing to Stay Employed in Extension, Table 14 Individual Work-Related Factors Contributing to Agents Choosing to Stay Employed with Extension, Table 15 Individual Non-Work Related Factors Contributing to Agents Choosing to Stay Employed with Extension, the mean score and standard deviation of the factors are included to show the comparative importance of each factor.

Cronbach’s alpha was used as a measure of internal consistency, or how closely related a set of items is as a group. The Cronbach’s alpha score for organizational factors was .825, which suggests relatively high internal consistency. The mean for organizational factors was 3.61, with a standard deviation of .968. Variety of work or scheduling provided the highest frequency (419), percentage (95.7%), mean (4.37), and lowest standard deviation (.624) when respondents were asked to choose organizational factors of why they choose to stay employed as a CEA with AgriLife Extension. Task repetitiveness provided the lowest percentage (20.5%), Salary provided the lowest mean (2.64) and highest standard deviation (1.16) for organizational factors as choices why agents choose to stay employed with Extension as shown in Table 8 Organizational Factors Contributing to Agents Choosing to Stay Employed in Extension. Responses of 77.7% (338) agreed or strongly agreed that benefits or retirement package were a reason to stay with Extension with a mean of 3.47 (SD =.84). Agents, 73.95% (321) chose “no direct supervisor managing my work regularly” as an incentive to stay employed with AgriLife Extension with a mean of 3.89 (SD=.88). Job security or stability as a reason

to stay employed with Extension received 72.9% (317) with a mean 3.78 and SD=.816. Responses of 57.1% (249) agree or strongly agreed that indicated quality of support staff is a reason to stay employed with Extension.

Quality and support of specialist was an incentive to stay for 55.5% (241), with a mean of 3.44 (SD=1). Office quality as a reason to stay employed indicated by 52.4% (228) with a mean of 3.35 (SD=1.02). Quality and support from my direct supervisor as an incentive to stay employed with AgriLife Extension was selected by 50.1% (217) with a mean of 3.37 (SD=1.05). Forty five percent (195) of the agents agreed or strongly agreed that the quality and support of administration was an incentive to stay employed with Extension, with a mean of 3.17 (SD=1.08).

Recognition from supervisor was chosen by 41.5% (181) as a reason to stay employed with Extension, mean of 3.1 (SD=1.09). Salary was selected by 30.1 percent (131) of respondents as the reason they choose to stay employed with Extension, with a mean of 2.64 (SD=1.16). Twenty three point eight percent of respondents agree or strongly agreed opportunities for promotion or advancement were incentives to stay employed with the Extension Service. The organizational factor of task repetitiveness found 20.5% (89) responses as a determinant to stay employed with Extension, with a mean of 2.79 (SD=.88).

Table 8 *Organizational Factors Contributing to Agents Choosing to Stay Employed in Extension*

Organizational Factors	<i>f</i> (*)	%(*)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Variety of work or scheduling	419	95.7	4.37	.624
Benefit or retirement package	338	77.7	3.94	.84
No direct supervisor managing my work regularly	321	73.9	3.89	.88
Job security or stability	317	72.9	3.78	.816
Quality of support staff	249	57.1	3.58	1.083
Quality/support of specialist	241	55.5	3.44	1.0
Quality office environment/facilities/equipment	228	52.4	3.35	1.026
Quality/support from direct supervisor	217	50.1	3.37	1.05
Quality/support of administration	195	45	3.17	1.08
Recognition from supervisor	181	41.5	3.1	1.09
Salary	131	30.1	2.64	1.16
Opportunities for promotion or advancement	104	23.8	2.71	1.029
Task repetitiveness	89	20.5	2.79	.88

(*) Responses of agree and strongly agree were added together

Table 9 Individual Work-Related Factors Contributing to Agents Choosing to Stay Employed with Extension provided a mean of 3.76 (SD=.807). The Cronbach's alpha for individual work related factors was .823. Interesting work led all responses in frequency (409), percentage (94.9), largest mean (4.29), and smallest standard deviation (.57). Opportunity to be creative through challenging work followed as reasons to stay employed with Extension with 88.7% (409) and a mean of 4.13 (SD=.65). Responses

for personal satisfaction as the incentive to stay in Extension were identified by 85.9% (370) with a mean of 4.09 (SD=.68). For professional schedule, 84.4% or 364 individuals responded with a mean of 4.07 and a standard deviation of .84. Professional relationships with co-workers and peers through professional associations was also an incentive to stay with 80.8% (346), with a mean of 3.97 (SD=.75). Seventy-six percent (327) of agents selected recognition from clientele I serve as an incentive to stay employed with AgriLife Extension, with a mean of 3.93 (SD=.72). Opportunities for professional development was an incentive to stay for 75.2% (324) with a mean of 3.81 (SD=.78). Responding county agents (67.2 or 287 persons) chose opportunity to travel on the job as an incentive to stay. This variable had a mean of 3.7 and a standard deviation of .82.

Job requirements or expectations was important to 54.6% (233) of respondents with a mean of 3.41 (SD=.9). The opportunity to have my children involved in my work through 4-H was chosen as an incentive to stay in Extension by 53.5% (228) with a mean of 3.67 (SD=.92). Forty point three percent of agents chose opportunity to be involved in organizational decisions, with a mean score of 3.13 (SD=1.02). Lastly, the manageable workload factor was identified, with only 36.6 (157) percent, mean of 2.97 and standard deviation of .98.

Table 9 *Individual Work-Related Factors Contributing to Agents Choosing to Stay Employed with Extension*

Individual Work-Related Factors	<i>f</i> (*)	%(*)	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Interesting Work	409	94.9	4.29	.57
Opportunity to be creative through challenging work	383	88.7	4.13	.65
Personal Satisfaction	370	85.9	4.09	.68
Professional schedule(flexible)	364	84.4	4.07	.84
Professional relationships with co-workers and peers through professional associations	346	80.8	3.97	.75
Recognition form clientele I serve	327	76	3.93	.72
Opportunities for professional development	324	75.2	3.81	.78
Opportunity to travel on the job	287	67.2	3.70	.82
Job requirements/expectations	233	54.6	3.41	.90
Opportunity to have my children involved in my work through 4-H	228	53.5	3.67	.92
Opportunity to be involved in organizational decisions	175	40.3	3.13	1.02
Manageable Workload	157	36.6	2.97	.98

(*) Responses of agree and strongly agree were added together

Table 10 Individual Non-Work Related Factors Contributing to agents choosing to stay employed with Extension provides a mean of 3.50 and a standard deviation of .881. Cronbach's alpha for individual non-work factors contributing to agents choosing to stay in Extension was .760. Opportunity to contribute to my community led all individual non-work related factors as a reason to stay employed in Extension in frequency (380), percent (88.1), high mean of 4.06, and closest standard deviation (.68).

Opportunity to know and interact with community leaders was chosen as an incentive by 78.2% (336), with a mean of 3.86 (SD=.7). Of the responding agents, 76.3% (274) identified opportunity for personal growth and development as an incentive, with a mean of 3.83 and standard deviation of .763. My professional status in the community was the choice of 257 (59.7%) agents, with a mean score of 3.56 (SD=.820).

Fifty-eight percent (249) of agents selected opportunities to pursue personal interest, with a mean of 3.44 (SD=.98). Opportunity to spend time with family was an incentive to 42.2% (181) agents, mean of 3.04, (SD=1.18). Only 20.5 percent of respondents chose opportunity for outside financial interest as their reason to stay employed with Extension; mean of this was 2.73 (SD=1.01)

Table 10 Individual Non-Work Related Factors Contributing to Agents Choosing to Stay Employed with Extension

Individual Non-Work Related Factors	<i>f</i>	<i>%(*)</i>	<i>M</i>	<i>SD</i>
Opportunity to contribute to my community	380	88.1	4.06	.68
Opportunity to know and interact with community leaders	336	78.2	3.86	.70
Opportunity for personal growth and development	274	76.3	3.83	.763
My professional status in the community	257	59.7	3.56	.82
Opportunities to pursue personal interest	249	58	3.44	.98
Opportunity to spend time with family	181	42.2	3.04	1.18
Opportunity for outside financial interest	88	20.5	2.73	1.01

Five questions on the instrument were open-ended. These questions were included to add depth and perception to agents' answers on other questions. These open-ended questions allowed the responders to provide detail and explain their answers. The open-ended responses should allow for more insight into why responders answered as they did. If there are a number of key words that can be statistically proven to be significant, a theme or pattern can be recognized as reasons agents stay employed with AgriLife Extension Service. Table 11 Keyword Frequency for Organizational Factor Open Ended Comments include responses to the question why agents choose strongly agree on organizational factors to remain employed as a CEA with AgriLife Extension, with the following responses: 39.5 % variety (87), secretaries at 12.2% (22), benefits 8.65 (19) and flexibility 8.6% (19), and service at 6.8% (15). These comments were followed by supervisor, schedule, salary, specialist, retirement, administration, professionalism, stability, advancement, challenging, satisfaction, and opportunity. The response to these questions was quite good; a response was optional, with 229 answering the first open-ended question.

Table 11 *Keyword Frequency for Organizational Factor Open Ended Comments*

Keyword	<i>f</i>	%
Variety	87	39.5
Secretaries	22	12.2
Benefits	19	8.6
Flexibility	19	8.6
Service	15	6.8
Supervisor	8	3.6
Schedule	8	3.6
Salary	7	3.1
Specialist	7	3.1
Retirement	6	2.7
Administration	5	2.2
Professionalism	4	1.8
Stability	4	1.8
Advancement	3	1.3
Challenging	2	0.9
Satisfaction	2	0.9
Opportunity	2	0.9

Table 12 Keyword Frequency for Individual Work Related Factor Open Ended Comments included the following responses: service 19.7% (32), flexibility 15.4% (25), satisfaction 11.7% (19), variety 11.7% (19), opportunity 9.2% (15) and challenging 9.2% (15). The remaining responses for individual work related factors were: 6.7% 4-H, 6.7% professionalism, 4.4% travel, and 4.3% development. There were 177 responses to this open-ended question.

Table 12 *Keyword Frequency for Individual Work-Related Factor Open Ended Comments*

Keyword	<i>f</i>	%
Service	32	19.7
Flexibility	25	15.4
Satisfaction	19	11.7
Variety	19	11.7
Opportunity	15	9.2
Challenging	15	9.2
4-H	11	6.7
Professionalism	11	6.7
Travel	7	4.4
Development	7	4.3
Benefits	1	.6

As shown in Table 13, keyword counts for open ended comments about individual non-work related factors are: 32.9% (32) community, 16.4% (16) opportunity, 15.4% (15) development, 10.3% (10) being respected, 9.2% (9)family, 8.2% (8) service, 3% (3) youth, 3% (3) flexibility, and lastly 1% (1) outside employment. A total of 94 responses were provided by the audience for this open-ended question

Table 13 *Keyword Frequency for Individual Non-Work Related Open Ended Comments*

Keyword	<i>f</i>	%
Community	32	32.9
Opportunity	16	16.4
Development	15	15.4
Respected	10	10.3
Family	9	9.2
Service	8	8.2
Youth	3	3
Flexibility	3	3
Outside Employment	1	1

Table 14 provides the open-ended comments for the question if you have thought about leaving Extension employment, and if so, for what reasons. Responses to this open-ended question tallied the most responses of any open-ended question, with 294 responses. The responses to this question are: salary at 47.7% (132), workload 10% (28), family 6.1% (17), teaching 4.6% (13), supervisor 3.6% (10), stability 2.1% (6), travel 2.1% (6) and expectations 2.1% (6). The remaining responses were: coworkers, administration, reporting, spouse, secretary, opportunity, school, reduction in force, dossier, repetition, flexibility, clientele, respect, resources, 4-H and budget.

Table 14 *Keyword Frequency for Individuals Who Thought About Leaving Extension Employment for Another Job Opportunity*

Keyword	<i>f</i>	%
Salary	132	47.7
Workload	28	10
Family	17	6.1
Teaching	13	4.6
Supervisor	10	3.6
Hours	10	3.6
Stability	6	2.1
Travel	6	2.1
Expectations	6	2.1
Coworkers	5	1.8
Administration	5	1.8
Reporting	4	1.4
Spouse	4	1.4
Secretary	4	1.4
Opportunity	4	1.4
School	3	1
RIF	3	1
Dossier	3	1
Repetition	2	.7
Flexibility	2	.7
Clientele	2	.7
Respect	2	.7
Resources	1	.3
4-H	1	.3
Budgets	1	.3

Responses from the question about individuals who thought about leaving Extension for another job but did not pursue another job - why did you choose to stay employed with Extension?, provided in Table 15: 18.5% (21) flexibility, 12.3% (14) location, 11.5% (13) retirement, 10.6% (12) service, 6.1% (7) clients, 6.1% (7) security, 6.1% (7) benefits, 5.3% (6) timing, 4.4% (5) salary, and 3.5% (4) family. These responses from agents were followed by 2.6% (3) economy, 2.6% (3) coworkers, 2.6% (3) relationships. The following responses all represented 0.8% individually: variety, 4-H, goals, administration, travel and opportunities for keyword frequency for Individual Who Thought About Leaving Extension for Another Job but Did Not Pursue Another Job, or Why They Chose to Stay Employed with AgriLife Extension. The number of responses to this open-ended question was quite acceptable with 142 responses recorded. Keyword frequency responses provide more insight into why agents strongly agree with responses.

Table 15 *Keyword Frequency for Individual Who Thought About Leaving Extension for Another Job but Did Not Pursue Another Job, Why You Chose to Stay Employed with Extension*

Keyword	<i>f</i>	%
Flexibility	21	18.5
Location	14	12.3
Retirement	13	11.5
Service	12	10.6
Clients	7	6.1
Security	7	6.1
Benefits	7	6.1
Timing	6	5.3
Salary	5	4.4
Family	4	3.5
Economy	3	2.6
Coworkers	3	2.6
Relationships	3	2.6
Variety	1	.8
4-H	1	.8
Goals	1	.8
Administration	1	.8
Travel	1	.8
Opportunities	1	.8

Results for Objective Three

The third objective is to identify patterns and define relationships between factors that contribute to retention of county Extension agents. A Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was computed to assess the nature and strength of various relationships between organizational, individual work and non-work factors of county Extension agents who choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension. There is a statistical significance when items are found to be less than or equal to the .05 level. Table 16 provides data at moderate correlation (.30-.49) and above for organizational factor variables. When comparing “recognition from supervisor” and “quality and support from direct supervisor,” a strong relationship exists of $r=.69$, ($p<.00$). “Quality or support of administration” and “quality and support from direct supervisor” also showed a strong relationship of $r=.62$, ($p<.00$). The remaining relationships are moderate: “quality or support of administration” and “salary” of $r=.42$, ($p<.00$); “benefit or retirement package” and “job security or stability” of $r=.41$, ($p<.00$); “quality of support staff” and “quality or support from direct supervisor” of $r=.40$, ($p<.00$); “opportunities for promotion or advancement” and “salary” of $r=.38$, ($p<.00$); “opportunities for promotion or advancement” and “quality or support from direct supervisor” of $r=.35$, ($p<.00$); “quality office environment or facility” and “quality or support from direct supervisor” of $r=.35$, ($p<.00$); and “quality or support of specialist” and “quality or support from direct supervisor” of $r=.34$, ($p<.00$).

Table 16 *Relationships Between Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents*

	Quality/Support from direct supervisor	Salary	Job Security/Stability
Variable	r	r	r
Recognition from supervisor	.69		
Quality/support of administration	.62	.42	
Benefit/retirement package			.41
Quality of support staff	.40		
Opportunities for promotion/advancement	.35	.38	
Quality office environment/facility	.35		
Quality/support of specialist	.34		

Table 17 provides relationships between individual work related factors and retention of county Extension agents. Relationships identified are for the most part moderate to slightly strong (.41-.53). “Manageable workload” and “job requirements or expectations” showed a slightly strong relationship of $r=.53$, ($p<.00$). The “opportunity to be creative through challenging work” was also slightly strong with a relationship of $r=.52$, ($p<.00$). The moderate relationships for individual work related factors are as follows: “interesting work” and “personal satisfaction” of $r=.48$, ($p<.00$); “opportunity to be creative through challenging work” and “personal satisfaction” with a relationship of $r=.47$, ($p<.00$); “opportunity to be involved in organizational decisions” and “job requirements or expectations” of $r=.44$, ($p<.00$); “opportunity to be involved in organizational decisions” and “travel on the job” of $r=.42$, ($p<.00$); and “opportunity to be

creative through challenging work” and “professional relationships” of $r=.41$, ($p<.00$); and “opportunity to travel on the job” and “professional development” with a $r=.41$, ($p<.00$).

Table 17 *Relationships Between Individual Work Related Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents*

Variable	Job requirements/ expectations r	Interesting work r	Personal satisfaction r	Travel on the job r	Professional relationships r
Manageable workload	.53				
Opportunity to be creative through challenging work		.52	.47		.41
Interesting work			.48		
Opportunity to be involved in organizational decisions	.44			.42	
Opportunity to travel on the job					

As shown in Table 18, the strength of relationships between individual non work-related factors for retaining county Extension agents showed two strong relationships while the remaining relationships were moderate. The correlation between “my professional status in the community” and “interact with community leaders” was $r=.57$, ($p<.00$). The slightly strong relationship was “opportunity for outside financial interest” at $r=.50$, ($p<.00$). The remaining moderate relationships were: “interact with community leaders” and “contribute to my community” at $r=.49$, ($p<.00$); “pursue personal interest”

and “spend time with family” of $r=.44$, ($p<.00$); “opportunity for outside financial interest” and “spend time with family” of $r=.38$, ($p<.00$); “opportunity for personal growth and development” and “pursue personal interest” of $r=.38$, ($p<.00$).

Table 18 *Relationships Between Individual Non-Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents*

Variable	Interact with community leaders r	Pursue personal interest r	Contribute to my community r	Spend time with family r
My professional status in the community	.57			
Opportunity for outside financial interest		.5		.38
Interact with community leaders			.49	
Pursue personal interest				.44
Opportunity for personal growth and development		.38		

Results for Objective Four

The fourth objective is to identify patterns and themes that can be used as predictors of why county Extension agents choose to remain employed with Extension. Analysis of variance F-tests was used to predict differences among the dependent variables (organizational, individual work, and individual non-work factors) with independent variables (demographic factors) that have two or more choices for why county Extension agents choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension. The

independent two sample t-test was utilized to predict the differences between dependent variable (organizational, individual work, individual non-work factors) with the independent variables (demographic factors) with only two choices for why county Extension agents choose to stay employed with Extension.

In Table 19, analysis of variance is used to determine the difference in means between the organizational factors (dependent variable) and position title (independent) variables. The response data indicates no significant difference, $F(7,408)=1.30, p=.247$ for position title and organizational factors as a reason agents choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.

Table 19 Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Position

Position	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
CEA-Ag/Nr	203	3.34	.5	1.30	.247
CEA-FCS	135	3.49	.57		
CEA-UYD	2	3.53	.21		
CEA-Hort	17	3.22	.53		
CEA-Marine	5	3.26	.46		
CEA-NR	2	3.76	.21		
CEA-4-H	51	3.40	.49		
CEA-D	1	3.76	0		

Table 20 provides the analysis of variance F-test results for individual work factors and agent position or job title. It indicates no significant difference, $F(7,409)=1.06, p=.387$, between individual work factors and agent position.

Table 20 *Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Position*

Position	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
CEA-Ag/Nr	203	3.72	.51	1.06	.387
CEA-FCS	136	3.84	.47		
CEA-UYD	2	3.95	.05		
CEA-Hort	17	3.64	.29		
CEA-Marine	5	3.61	.51		
CEA-NR	2	3.7	.29		
CEA-4-H	51	3.73	.40		
CEA-D	1	3.5	0		

As shown in Table 21 analysis of variance there was no significant difference suggested, $F(7,409)=1.16$, $p=.321$ between county Extension agents position and individual non-work factors.

Table 21 *Individual Non-Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Position*

Position	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
CEA-Ag/Nr	203	3.47	.58	1.16	.321
CEA-FCS	136	3.58	.57		
CEA-UYD	2	3.71	.0		
CEA-Hort	17	3.42	.32		
CEA-Marine	5	3.45	.43		
CEA-NR	2	3.64	.30		
CEA-4-H	51	3.33	.59		
CEA-D	1	3.42	0		

Table 22 shows significant differences between organizational factors and years employed with Extension, $F(4,418)=3.43$, $p=.009$. Those agents with fewer than 3 years of employment ($M=3.53$, $SD=.52$) are more likely to agree that organizational related factors are an incentive to stay employed in AgriLife Extension as compared to agents who have been employed for 3-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16-20+ years.

Table 22 Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Years Employed with Extension

Years Employed	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Less than 3	117	3.53	.52	3.43	.009
3 – 5	36	3.24	.56		
6 – 10	80	3.29	.54		
11 – 15	51	3.35	.63		
16 – 20+	139	3.41	.52		

As shown in Table 23, there is a significant difference, $F(4, 419)=4.03$, $p=.003$, between years of Extension experience and individual work-related factors why agents choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension. Those agents with fewer than 3 years of employment ($M=3.83$, $SD=.44$) are more likely to agree that individual work-related factors are an incentive to remain employed in Extension as compared with agents who have been employed for 3-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16-20+ years.

Table 23 *Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Years Employed with Extension*

Years Employed	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Less than 3	118	3.83	.44	4.03	.003
3 – 5	36	3.55	.47		
6 – 10	80	3.66	.51		
11 – 15	51	3.71	.58		
16 – 20+	139	3.82	.41		

Table 24 illustrates a significant difference, $F(4,419)=5.46$, $p=.00$, between years employed by agents and individual non-work related factors why agents choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension. Those agents with fewer than 3 years of employment ($M=3.64$, $SD=.48$) tend to agree that individual non-work related factors are an incentive to remain employed in Extension as compared with agents who have been employed for 3-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16-20+ years.

Table 24 *Individual Non-Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Years Employed with Extension*

Years Employed	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Less than 3	118	3.64	.48	5.46	0
3 – 5	36	3.25	.53		
6 – 10	80	3.39	.64		
11 – 15	51	3.36	.73		
16 – 20+	139	3.55	.51		

Table 25 shows no significant difference, $F(4,418)=.986$, $p=.415$, for organizational factors and population of county served by agents.

Table 25 Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Population of County Currently Served

County Population	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Less than 2,000	15	3.57	.43	.986	.415
2,001 – 10,000	84	3.44	.55		
10,001 – 20,000	73	3.44	.51		
20,001 – 50,000	89	3.40	.60		
50,001 and >	162	3.34	.54		

Discussing retention factors by population of county served and individual work related factors as an incentive to stay employed with AgriLife Extension in Table 26, indicated no significance difference, $F(4, 419)=.582$, $p=.676$.

Table 26 Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Population of County Currently Served

County Population	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Less than 2,000	15	3.81	.38	.582	.676
2,001 – 10,000	85	3.82	.55		
10,001 – 20,000	73	3.73	.39		
20,001 – 50,000	89	3.78	.54		
50,001 and >	162	3.73	.44		

Table 27 provides no significant difference, $F(4,419)=2.01$, $p=.091$ for individual non-work factors and population of county served as an incentive for agents to choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.

Table 27 *Individual Non-Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Population of County Currently Served*

County Population	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Less than 2,000	15	3.82	.47	2.01	.091
2,001 – 10,000	85	3.57	.61		
10,001 – 20,000	73	3.49	.52		
20,001 – 50,000	89	3.49	.59		
50,001 and >	162	3.44	.56		

When we look at Table 28 we see that there is no significance $F(3,408)=1.59$, $p=.190$ for organizational factors and current dossier level serving as an incentive for agents to remain employed with AgriLife Extension.

Table 28 *Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Current Dossier Level*

Level	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
I	205	3.43	.54	.047	.828
II	98	3.29	.56		
III	67	3.41	.55		
IV	42	3.47	.54		

Table 29 illustrates no significant difference $F(3,409)=1.10$, $p=.34$, between current dossier level and individual work factors influencing agents to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.

Table 29 *Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Current Dossier Level*

Level	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
I	206	3.75	.48	2.43	.119
II	98	3.73	.45		
III	67	3.83	.48		
IV	42	3.85	.49		

There was no significant difference $F(3,409)=.702$, $p=.552$ identified in Table 30, individual non-work factors and current dossier level.

Table 30 *Individual Non-Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Current Dossier Level*

Level	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
I	206	3.57	.61	.702	.552
II	98	3.49	.55		
III	67	3.45	.52		
IV	42	3.61	.51		

In Table 31 we again find no significant difference, $F(2,146)=.274$, $p=.76$, this time between last dossier level promotion and organizational factors.

Table 31 *Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Last Dossier Level Promotion*

Level	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
I – II	57	3.36	.57	.274	.760
II – III	55	3.41	.50		
III – IV	37	3.45	.60		

We look at individual work factors and last dossier level promotion in Table 32 and find no significant difference, $F(2,146)=.558, p=.574$.

Table 32 *Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Last Dossier Level Promotion*

Level	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
I – II	57	3.76	.42	.558	.574
II – III	55	3.84	.39		
III – IV	37	3.84	.49		

In Table 33, there was no significant difference suggested, $F(2,146)=.631, p=.533$, between individual non-work related factors and the level of the last dossier promotion of county Extension agents who choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.

Table 33 *Individual Non-Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Last Dossier Level Promotion*

Level	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
I – II	57	3.50	.53	.631	.533
II – III	55	3.47	.53		
III – IV	37	3.59	.55		

As shown below in Table 34, no significant difference was identified, $F(3, 415)=.90, p=.437$, between organizational factors and retention of county Extension agents by age range.

Table 34 *Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Age Range*

Age	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
30 and Younger	87	3.41	.56	.909	.437
31 – 40	94	3.34	.57		
41 - 50	129	3.38	.53		
51 and Older	109	3.47	.55		

In Table 35, analysis of variance was used again on individual work factors and agents' age range with no significant differences, $F(3,416)=2.16$, $p=.051$.

Table 35 *Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Age Range*

Age	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
30 and Younger	87	3.82	.44	2.617	.051
31 – 40	95	3.65	.54		
41 - 50	129	3.82	.42		
51 and Older	109	3.75	.49		

No significant differences were identified in the data, $F(3,416)=.644$, $p=.587$, in Table 36, individual non-work factors and age of agent for choosing to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.

Table 36 *Individual Non-Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Age Range*

Age	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
30 and Younger	87	3.55	.51	.644	.587
31 – 40	95	3.46	.64		
41 - 50	129	3.48	.58		
51 and Older	109	3.54	.54		

In Table 37, organizational factors and number of children an agent has, there is no significant difference, $F(3,414)=.58$, $p=.626$, between these for agents who choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.

Table 37 *Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Number of Children*

Number	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>P</i>
No children	122	3.35	.59	.584	.626
1 – 2	202	3.40	.53		
2 – 3	63	3.41	.60		
3 or more	31	3.50	.48		

The data shown in Table 38 shows there is no significant difference, $F(3,415)=.23$, $p=.869$, between individual work factors and number of children an agent has as reasons to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.

Table 38 *Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Number of Children*

Number	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
No children	123	3.73	.52	.239	.869
1 – 2	202	3.77	.46		
2 – 3	63	3.78	.51		
3 or more	31	3.79	.35		

As for number of children and individual non-work related factors, Table 39 shows there are no significant differences, $F(3,415)=1.11$, $p=.342$ for incentives to stay employed with AgriLife Extension

Table 39 *Individual Non-Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Number of Children*

Number	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
No children	123	3.43	.58	1.11	.342
1 – 2	202	3.54	.55		
2 – 3	63	3.54	.61		
3 or more	31	3.45	.58		

Table 40 does show a significant difference, $F(2,414)=5.86$, $p=.003$, between agent education level and organizational factors related to choosing to stay employed with Extension. County Extension agents with a Bachelor's degree ($M=3.50$, $SD=.45$) are more likely to agree that organizational related factors are an incentive for choosing to remain employed in Extension as compared to agents who have Masters or Doctorate degrees.

Table 40 *Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Education Level*

Level	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Bachelors	100	3.50	0.45	5.86	.003
Masters	298	3.38	.57		
Doctorate	19	3.04	.62		

There was no significant difference, $F(2,415)=1.31$, $p=.27$, in Table 41, between individual work factors and agent education level as an incentive to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.

Table 41 *Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Education Level*

Level	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Bachelors	100	3.82	.42	1.31	.27
Masters	299	3.75	.49		
Doctorate	19	3.65	.49		

As depicted in Table 42, there was a significant difference, $F(3,415)=3.09$, $p=.047$, between individual non-work factors and agent education level as an incentive to for choosing to remain employed with AgriLife Extension. County Extension agents with a Bachelor's degree education level ($M=3.61$, $SD=.50$) are more likely to agree that individual non-work related factors are an incentive to remain employed in AgriLife Extension as compared to agents with Masters or Doctorate degrees.

Table 42 *Individual Non-Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Education Level*

Level	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
Bachelors	100	3.61	.500	3.09	.047
Masters	299	3.47	.599		
Doctorate	19	3.32	.552		

In Table 43, there was significant difference, $F(2,237)=3.18$, $p=.023$, between organizational factors and number of counties served as an incentive to stay employed with AgriLife Extension. The county Extension agents who have served in 3-5 counties ($M=3.43$, $SD=.50$) are more likely to agree that organizational related factors are an incentive to for choosing to stay employed in AgriLife Extension as compared to county agents who have served in 1-2, 3-5 counties, and more than 5 counties.

Table 43 *Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Number of Counties Served*

Number	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1 – 2	118	3.23	.57	3.81	.023
3 – 5	118	3.43	.50		
Over 5 counties	4	3.30	.50		

Table 44 shows significant differences, $F(2,237)=4.28$, $p=.015$, between number of counties served and individual work factors serving as an incentive to stay employed with Extension. The county Extension agents who have served in more than 5 counties ($M=3.95$, $SD=.36$) are more likely to agree that individual work related factors are an

incentive to remain employed in AgriLife Extension as compared to county agents who have served in 1-2, or 3-5 counties.

Table 44 *Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Number of Counties Served*

Number	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1 – 2	118	3.65	.48	4.28	.015
3 – 5	118	3.82	.48		
Over 5 counties	4	3.95	.36		

Lastly, between individual non-work related factors and number of counties served by an agent, there is no significant difference, $F(2,237)=2.49$, $p=.085$.

Table 45 *Individual Non-Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Number of Counties Served*

Number	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>F</i>	<i>p</i>
1 – 2	118	3.37	.65.	2.49	.085
3 – 5	118	3.53	.59		
Over 5 counties	4	3.78	.74		

Independent two sample t-test was utilized to predict differences in the mean with the dependent (organizational, individual work, individual non-work factors) variable with the independent (demographic factors) variables with only two choices.. Tables 51-73 provide reference to the results of the t-test for corresponding comparisons.

When we discuss organizational factors and retention of county agents, as shown in Table 46, by “if they advanced on the dossier promotion track,” we find no significant difference in the scores of “yes” (M=3.38, SD=.56) and “no” (M=3.39, SD=.55), $t(412)=-.218, p=.828$. These results suggest that advancing on the dossier track does not provide a statistically significant incentive to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.

Table 46 *Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Advancing on Dossier Promotion Track*

Have you Advanced?	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	143	3.38	.56	-.218	.828
No	271	3.39	.55		

Table 47 shows there was no significant difference for “yes” (M=3.81, SD=.43) and “no” (M=3.73, SD=.49); $t(413)=1.56, p=.119$ for individual work factors and agents advancing on dossier promotion track for agent retention.

Table 47 *Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Advancing on Dossier Promotion Track*

Have you Advanced?	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	143	3.81	.43	1.56	.119
No	272	3.73	.49		

For individual non-work factors there was no significant difference for “yes” (M=3.5, SD=.54) and “no” (M=3.5, SD=.59); $t(413)=-.126, p=.899$ for agents advancing

on dossier promotion track serving as an incentive to stay employed with AgriLife , illustrated in Table 48.

Table 48 *Individual Non-Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Advancing on Dossier Promotion Track*

Have you Advanced?	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	143	3.50	.54	-.126	.899
No	272	3.50	.59		

In Table 49, the discussion of organizational factors by marital status shows no significance for married ($M=3.39$, $SD=.56$) and single ($M=3.40$, $SD=.54$); $t(419)=-1.62$, $p=.871$ as a factor for agent retention.

Table 49 *Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Marital Status*

Marital Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Married	304	3.39	.56	-.162	.871
Single	117	3.40	.54		

Table 50 provides data on individual work factors and retention of agents by marital status. There is no significant difference between married ($M=3.74$, $SD=.46$) and single ($M=3.81$, $SD=.50$); $t(420)=-1.268$, $p=.206$. It appears that marital status is not a significant factor in Extension agent retention.

Table 50 *Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Marital Status*

Marital Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Married	304	3.74	.46	-1.268	.206
Single	118	3.81	.50		

There was no significant difference between married (M=3.49, SD=.59) and single (M=3.54, SD=.51); $t(420)$, $p=.438$ agents as shown in Table 51, with individual non-work related factors and marital status being factors for agent retention.

Table 51 *Individual Non-Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Marital Status*

Marital Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Married	304	3.49	.59	-.776	.438
Single	118	3.54	.51		

Table 52 shows no significant difference for males (M=3.35, SD=.54) and females (M=3.45, SD=.56); $t(414)=-1.92$, $p=.055$, in organizational factors, as an incentive to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.

Table 52 *Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Gender*

Marital Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Male	207	3.35	.54	-1.92	.055
Female	209	3.45	.56		

As shown in Table 53, there was a significant difference in scores from males (M=3.71, SD=.48) and females (M=3.81, SD=.46); $t(415)=-2.11, p=.035$ for individual work factors and remaining employed as county Extension agents by gender. Females tend to agree more than their male counterparts that individual work related factors are an incentive to stay employed with Extension as compared to their male counterparts.

Table 53 Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Gender

Marital Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Male	207	3.71	.48	-2.11	.035
Female	210	3.81	.46		

There was no significant difference in individual non-work related factors by gender. Table 54 shows male (M=3.48, SD=.58) and female (M=3.54, SD=.57); $t(415)=-1.06, p=.288$.

Table 54 Individual Non-Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Gender

Marital Status	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Male	207	3.48	.58	-1.06	.288
Female	210	3.54	.57		

As illustrated in Table 55, for organizational factors and retention of county agents as their first career choice there is no significant difference, true (M=3.41, SD=.55) and false (M=3.37,SD=.56); $t(415)=.754, p=.451$.

Table 55 *Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Agents Who Chose Extension as Their First Career Choice*

Was Extension your first career choice?	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
True	193	3.41	.55	.754	.451
False	224	3.37	.56		

Table 56, in the discussion of individual work related factors and agents choosing Extension as their first career being an incentive to stay employed with Extension there is no significant difference, true (M=3.79, SD=.45) and false (M=3.73,SD=.49); $t(416)=1.35, p=.177$.

Table 56 *Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Agents Who Chose Extension as Their First Career Choice*

Was Extension your first career choice?	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
True	193	3.79	.45	1.35	.177
False	225	3.73	.499		

As shown in Table 57, there is no significant difference identified for “true” (M=3.54, SD=.58) and “false” (M=3.47,SD=.57); $t(416)=1.20, p=.547$, for extension as an agent’s first career choice and individual non-work factors being a reasons to stay employed with Extension.

Table 57 *Individual Non-Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Agents Who Chose Extension as Their First Career Choice*

Was Extension your first career choice?	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
True	193	3.54	.58	1.20	.227
False	225	3.47	.57		

There was significant difference in “yes” (M=3.33, SD=.57) and “no” (M=3.48, SD=.52); $t(419)=-2.76, p=.006$ in organizational factors for agents who serve in multiple counties as an incentive to stay employed with AgriLife Extension as shown in Table 58. Agents who have not served in multiple counties agreed that was an incentive to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.

Table 58 *Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Agents Who Have Served in Multiple Counties*

Have you served in more than one county?	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	230	3.33	.57	-2.76	.006
No	191	3.48	.52		

Table 59 shows individual work related factors for agents who have served in multiple counties, with no significant difference [“yes” (M=3.74, SD=.49) and “no” (M=3.78, SD=.46); $t(420)=-.923, p=.357$] in incentive to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.

Table 59 *Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Agents Who Have Served in Multiple Counties*

Have you served in more than one county?	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	230	3.74	.49	-0.923	.357
No	192	3.78	.46		

As shown in Table 60 for individual non-work related factors and agents who have served in multiple counties with “yes” (M=3.45, SD=.63) and “no” (M=3.56, SD=.49); $t(420)=-2.08$, $p=.038$ there is significant difference. The data suggest that agents who have not served in multiple counties do not regard the prospect of doing so as an incentive to remain with AgriLife Extension.

Table 60 *Individual Non-Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Agents Who Have Served in Multiple Counties*

Have you served in more than one county?	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	230	3.45	.63	-2.08	.038
No	192	3.56	.49		

Table 61 shows a significant difference for agents who have thought about leaving Extension for another job opportunity [“yes” (M=3.27, SD=.51) and “no” (M=3.69, SD=.53); $t(420)=-7.55$, $p=.00$] leaving AgriLife Extension for another job opportunity. 71% of county Extension agents have contemplated leaving Extension for another job opportunity.

Table 61 *Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Agents Who Have Thought About Leaving Extension*

Have you thought about leaving Extension?	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	300	3.27	.51	-7.55	.0
No	122	3.69	.53		

Table 62 shows individual work factors and agents who have thought about leaving Extension for other job opportunities with yes ($M=3.67$, $SD=.48$) and no ($M=3.98$, $SD=.40$); $t(420)=-6.28$, $p=.00$ being significantly different. Agents who have not thought about leaving Extension employment agree that is an incentive to choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.

Table 62 *Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Agents Who Have Thought About Leaving Extension*

Have you thought about leaving Extension?	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	300	3.67	.48	-6.28	.0
No	122	3.98	.40		

To discuss individual non work-related factors in Table 63 with agents who have thought about leaving AgriLife Extension employment for another job opportunity would show a significant difference, with “yes” ($M=3.39$, $SD=.57$) and “no” ($M=3.76$, $SD=.49$); $t(420)=-6.34$, $p=.00$. Agents who have not thought about leaving Extension employment agree there is an incentive not to leave Extension employment.

Table 63 *Individual Non-Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Agents Who Have Thought About Leaving Extension*

Have you thought about leaving Extension?	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	300	3.39	.57	-6.34	.0
No	122	3.76	.49		

As shown in Table 64 there is no significant difference between “yes” (M=3.39, SD=.55) and “no” (M=3.39, SD=.55); $t(417)=-.060$, $p=.952$, for organization factors among agents who have left Extension and subsequently been rehired.

Table 64 *Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Agents Who Have Left Extension and been Rehired*

Have you left Extension and been Rehired?	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	49	3.39	.55	-.060	.952
No	370	3.39	.55		

In Table 65 there is no significant difference between “yes” (M=3.76, SD=.49) and “no” (M=3.77, SD=.47); $t(418)=-.167$, $p=.868$, in the response to individual work related factors and retention by agents who have left and been rehired.

Table 65 *Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Agents Who Have Left Extension and been Rehired*

Have you left Extension and been Rehired?	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	49	3.76	.49	-.167	.868
No	371	3.77	.47		

Table 66 indicates that regarding individual non work-related factors for agents who have left AgriLife Extension and subsequently been rehired, there is no significant difference between “yes” (M=3.49, SD=.65) and “no” (M=3.5, SD=.56); $t(418)=-.135$, $p=.893$.

Table 66 *Individual Non-Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Agents Who Have Left Extension and been Rehired*

Have you left Extension and been Rehired?	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	49	3.49	.65	-.135	.893
No	371	3.50	.56		

As shown in Table 67 for organizational factors and retention of AgriLife Extension agents who have applied for another job while employed with AgriLife Extension, there is a significant difference between “yes” (M=3.13, SD=.55) and “no” (M=3.49, SD=.53); $t(412)=-5.80$, $p=.00$. Agents who have not applied for another job while employed with Extension do find it as an incentive to remain employed with AgriLife Extension.

Table 67 *Organizational Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Agents Who Have Applied for another Job While Employed with Extension*

Have you applied for another job while employed with Extension?	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	106	3.13	.55	-5.80	.0
No	308	3.49	.53		

Table 68 shows a significance difference between “yes” (M=3.58, SD=.51) and “no” (M=3.82, SD=.45); $t(413)=-4.52, p=.00$, for individual work factors among agents who have applied for another job opportunity while employed with Extension. Agents who have not applied for another job opportunity agree that individual work factors are an incentive to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.

Table 68 *Individual Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Agents Who Have Applied for another Job While Employed with Extension*

Have you applied for another job while employed with Extension?	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	106	3.58	.51	-4.52	.0
No	309	3.82	.45		

As shown in Table 69, individual non work-factors for agents who have applied for another job opportunity while employed with AgriLife Extension shows a significant difference with “yes” (M=3.30, SD=.54) and “no” (M=3.57, SD=.56); $t(413)=-4.27, p=.00$. Agents who have not applied for another job opportunity agree that individual non-work related factors are an incentive to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.

Table 69 *Individual Non-Work Factors and Retention of County Extension Agents by Agents Who Have Applied for another Job While Employed with Extension*

Have you applied for another job while employed with Extension?	<i>n</i>	<i>M(a)</i>	<i>SD</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Yes	106	3.30	.54	-4.27	.0
No	309	3.57	.56		

A multiple regression analysis was run to predict organizational, individual work, and individual non-work related factors against job title, years employed, population of county served, current dossier level, advancement along dossier promotion track, last dossier level advanced, age, marital status, number of children, education level gender, extension first career choice, served in multiple counties, number of counties served, thought about leaving AgriLife Extension, left AgriLife Extension and rehired, and applied for another job while employed with Extension. As shown in Table 70, the variables predicted statistical significant organizational factors: $F(17,96)=2.874$, $p < .001$, $R^2 = .337$. The variables “have you advanced along the dossier promotion track?” ($p=.044$) and “have you thought about leaving Extension for another job opportunity?” ($p=.00$) added statistical significance to the prediction, ($p < .05$) why county Extension agents choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.

Table 70 *Regression by Dependent Variable Organizational Factors*

Variable	<i>Beta</i>	<i>t</i>	<i>p</i>
Job position title	.002	.019	.985
Years employed with Extension	-.164	-1.33	.185
County population you serve	-.019	-.188	.851
Current dossier level	-.019	-.075	.941
Have you advanced along the dossier promotion track	-.192	-2.04	.044
What is your last dossier promotion level	.084	.338	.736
Age range	-.044	-.388	.699
Marital status	.085	.853	.396
Number of children	-.105	-1.05	.295
Education level	-.004	-.045	.964
Gender	.107	1.07	.286
Was Extension your first career choice	-.045	-.455	.650
Have you served in multiple counties	-.085	-.913	.364
How many counties have you worked in	.188	1.89	.061
Have you thought about leaving Extension for another job	.438	4.44	.000
Have you left Extension and been rehired	-.025	-.289	.773
Have you applied for another job while employed with Extension	.153	1.67	.097
Adjusted R ² =.22			

Table 71 shows regression by dependent variable individual work factors and predicts $F(17,96)=1.365$, $p<.171$, $R^2=.052$. The variable “have you ever thought about

leaving AgriLife Extension for another job opportunity?" ($p=.003$) added statistical significance to the prediction, $p<.05$

Table 71 *Regression by Dependent Variable Individual Work Factors*

Variable	Beta	t	p
Job position title	-.017	-.155	.877
Years employed with Extension	.056	.413	.680
County population you serve	.022	.202	.840
Current dossier level	-.296	-1.06	.292
Have you advanced along the dossier promotion track	-.154	-1.48	.141
What is your last dossier promotion level	.291	1.06	.292
Age range	-.116	-.934	.352
Marital status	.135	1.23	.221
Number of children	-.086	-.781	.437
Education level	.140	1.34	.182
Gender	.008	.069	.945
Was Extension your first career choice	.013	.119	.905
Have you served in multiple counties	-.043	-.430	.668
How many counties have you worked in	.170	1.54	.125
Have you thought about leaving Extension for another job	.335	3.087	.003
Have you left Extension and been rehired	-.058	-.609	.544
Have you applied for another job while employed with Extension	.112	1.10	.271
Adjusted R ² =.052			

Table 72 shows regression by dependent variable individual non-work factors and predicts $F(17,96)=1.843$, $p<.033$, $R^2=.113$. The variable “have you ever thought about leaving AgriLife Extension for another job opportunity?” ($p=.002$) added statistical significance to the prediction, $p<.05$.

Table 72 Regression by Dependent Variable Individual Non-Work Related Factors

Variable	Beta	t	p
Job position title	-.166	-1.57	.118
Years employed with Extension	.059	.446	.656
County population you serve	-.089	-.831	.408
Current dossier level	-.439	-1.62	.107
Have you advanced along the dossier promotion track	-.013	-.126	.900
What is your last dossier promotion level	.456	1.71	.089
Age range	-.187	-1.55	.123
Marital status	.109	1.02	.308
Number of children	.088	.830	.409
Education level	.108	1.06	.288
Gender	.088	.826	.411
Was Extension your first career choice	-.037	-.356	.723
Have you served in multiple counties	.012	.126	.900
How many counties have you worked in	.044	.414	.680
Have you thought about leaving Extension for another job	.331	3.15	.002
Have you left and been rehired	-.030	-.323	.747
Have you applied for another job	.153	1.56	.121
Adjusted $R^2=.113$			

CHAPTER V

SUMMARY, CONCLUSIONS, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This final chapter contains a summary of the research and findings from this dissertation project. Implications and recommendations from these findings will be applicable to future county agent retention within AgriLife Extension.

Purpose and Objectives

The purpose of this study was to determine the organizational and individual factors related to job retention of Texas county Extension agents and learn why agents choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension. The study has four primary objectives:

- 1) Describe the demographics as related to factors among county Extension agents who choose to remain employed with AgriLife Extension;
- 2) Determine the factors that contribute to county Extension agents choosing to remain employed with AgriLife Extension under the categories of dependent (organizational, work and non-work individual factors) and independent (demographic) variables;
- 3) Identify patterns and define relationships between factors that contribute to retention of county Extension agents;
- 4) Identify patterns and themes that can be used as predictors of why county Extension agents choose to remain employed with AgriLife Extension.

There are numerous research studies on employee turnover (Clark, 1981; Kutilek, 2000; Mobley, 1982; Price, 1986; Rossano, 1985; Whaples, 1983). AgriLife Extension compiles data about why employees leave employment with Extension. As shown in Table 73 over the past 8 years, the County Extension turnover rate for AgriLife Extension has ranged from 4.3 % to 10.93% and averaged 7.41% over this period (Dromgoole, 2013). The fiscal year 2013 Texas statewide turnover rate was 17.6 percent for classified regular, full- and part-time employees based on 26,430 separations according to the Texas State Auditor's Office (2014). Those separations include both voluntary and involuntary separations. That was an increase from the fiscal year 2012 statewide turnover rate of 17.3 percent. The Texas State Auditor's Office (2014) reported during the past five years, turnover has gradually increased from 14.4 percent in fiscal year 2009 to 17.6 percent in fiscal year 2013. Excluding involuntary separations and retirements, the fiscal year 2013 statewide turnover rate was 10.0 percent. That rate, which is often considered more of a true turnover rate because it reflects preventable turnover, remained the same since fiscal year 2012, when it was also 10.0 percent. Voluntary separations, including retirements, accounted for the majority (75.2 percent) of the State's total separations in fiscal year 2013. That was a 2.5 percent increase in the number of voluntary separations since fiscal year 2012. Several factors may have contributed to the increase in the number of voluntary separations. The Texas State Auditor (2014) showed "The U.S. Bureau of Labor Statistics report that, as of October 2013, Texas had the largest increase in jobs in the nation compared to October 2012. According to the Office of the Comptroller of Public Accounts' *Biennial Revenue*

Estimate 2014-2015, job growth in Texas is projected to outpace the growth in the Texas labor force and result in a continuing decline in unemployment in fiscal years 2014 and 2015. - Overall, Texas's unemployment rate decreased in fiscal year 2013. The statewide unemployment rate decreased from 7.2 percent in fiscal year 2012 to 6.4 percent in fiscal year 2013.”

As illustrated in Table 73, Dromgoole and Ballabina (2013) find that county Extension agent turnover with AgriLife Extension was at its highest level since 2009 with sixty-one non-retirement separations. The 2010 and 2011 data do not include any employee numbers affected by the RIF (Reduction in Force). Of these sixty-one non-retirement separations the average length of service was 4.10 years with a range of service from .09 to 19.13 years of service. Turnover is highest among new employees in most organizations (Allen, 2006), and this should be where the first line of defense is developed to offset the loss. There are forty-three (70.49%) leaving with five years or less and twenty-nine (47.5%) leaving with less than two years of service (Dromgoole & Ballabina, 2013). In 2012 the average length of service from agents separating was 5.53 years with a range of .2 years to 21 years. In 2012 and 2013 eight agents resigned or were terminated each year due to performance issues and in 2011 there were only three agents that resigned or were terminated due to performance issues.

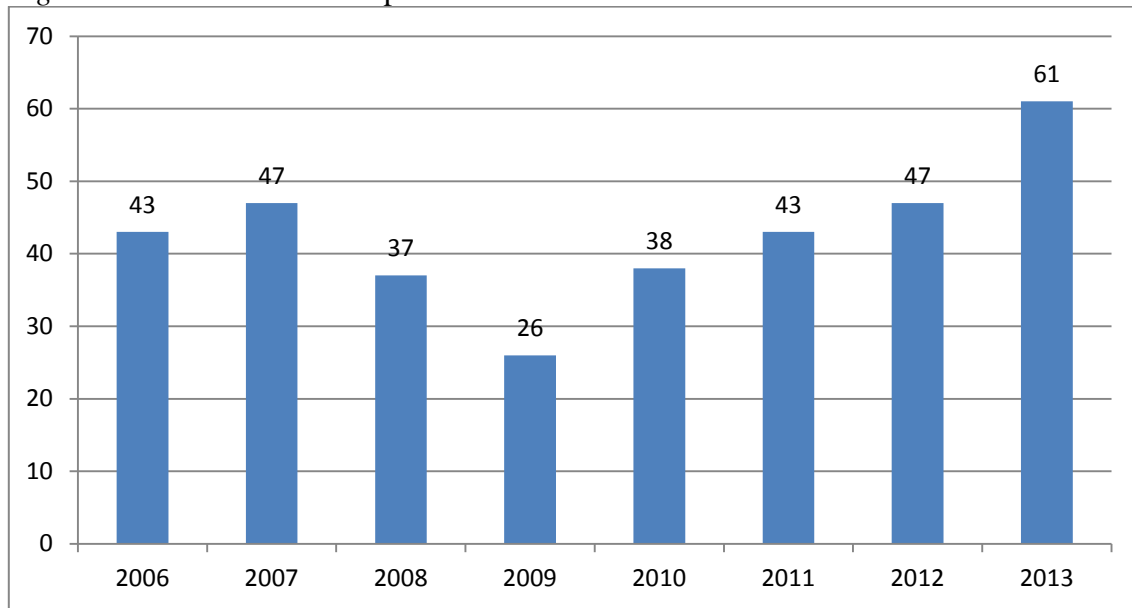
Table 73 County Extension Agent Retention Analysis - 2013

	2006	2007	2008	2009	2010	2011	2012	2013	8 Year Average
District 1	6	4	3	4	4	2	4	5	4
District 2	1	5	2	2	3	4	3	3	2.9
District 3	2	5	1	4	0	2	4	1	2.4
District 4	3	1	4	3	3	5	2	4	3.1
District 5	2	7	5	2	5	4	6	5	4.5
District 6	5	6	3	3	3	2	3	6	3.9
District 7	3	1	4	0	4	3	3	5	2.9
District 8	6	2	5	1	3	4	7	12	5
District 9	7	7	3	2	1	7	9	5	5.1
District 10	1	5	5	2	5	3	4	4	3.6
District 11	3	3	0	1	3	7	1	5	2.9
District 12	4	1	2	2	4	0	1	6	2.5
Total	43	47	37	26	38	43	47	61	42

Source: Darrell Dromgoole, Unpublished raw data, Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

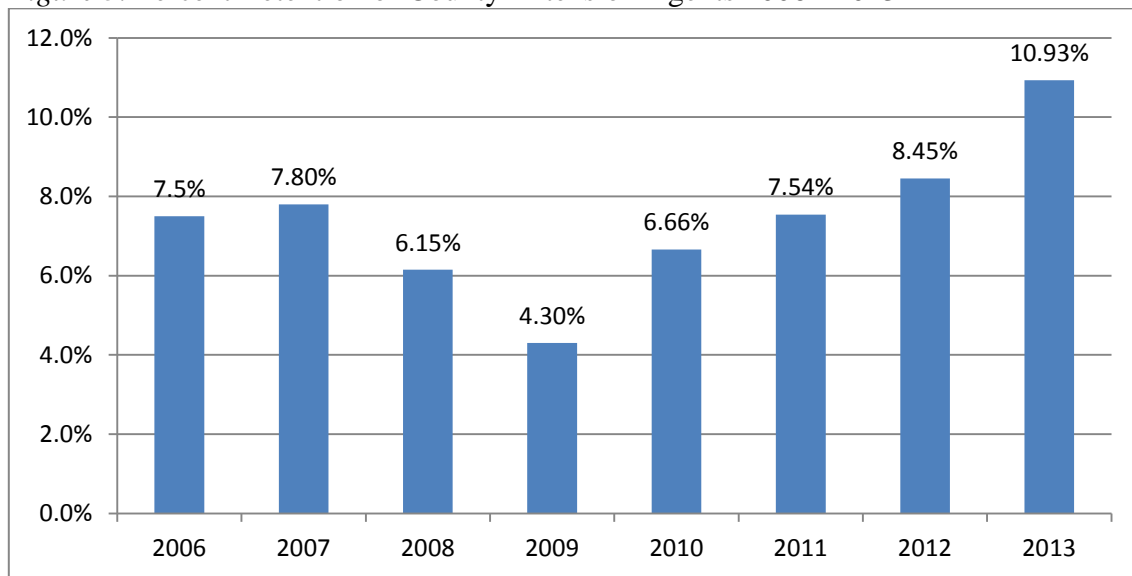
Figure 2 represents total non-retirement separations for agents with AgriLife Extension (2006-2013). Figure 3 provides the % turnover by year (number of separations/total number of positions). Figure 4 represents the reason for agent separation (non-retirement) for 2011-2013. Figure 5 provides the reasons for agents with 5 years or less separation (non-retirement) in 2011-2012.

Figure 2. Non-Retirement Separations 2006 - 2013



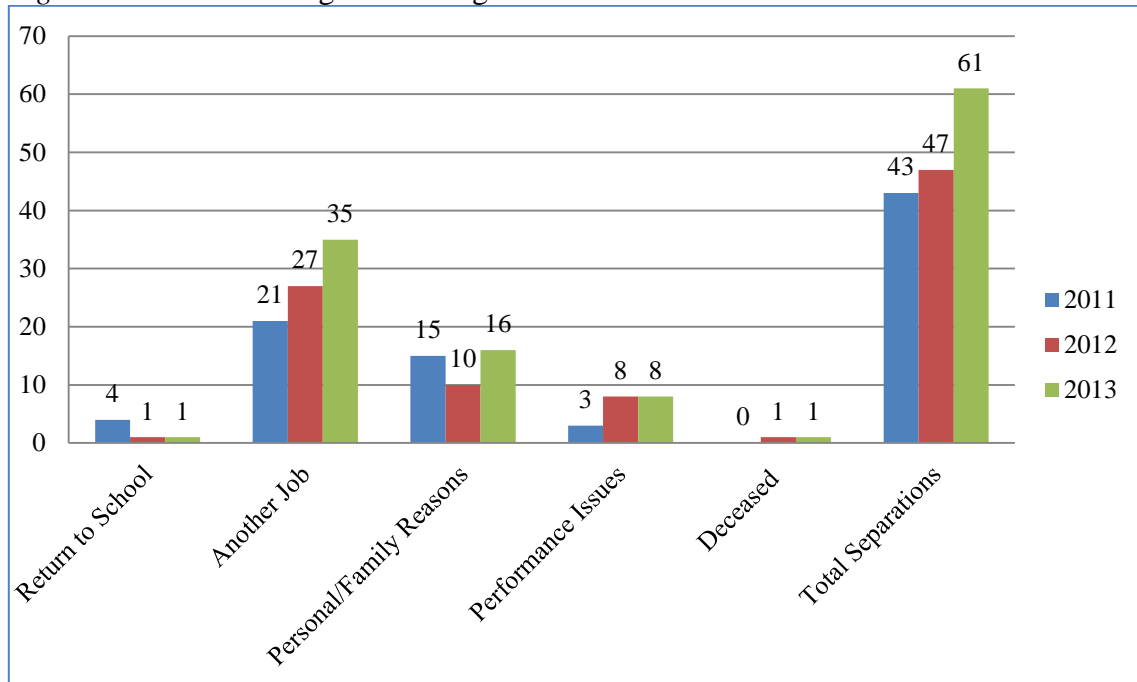
Dromgoole 2013, County Extension Agent Retention Analysis-2013

Figure 3. Percent Retention of County Extension Agents 2006 - 2013



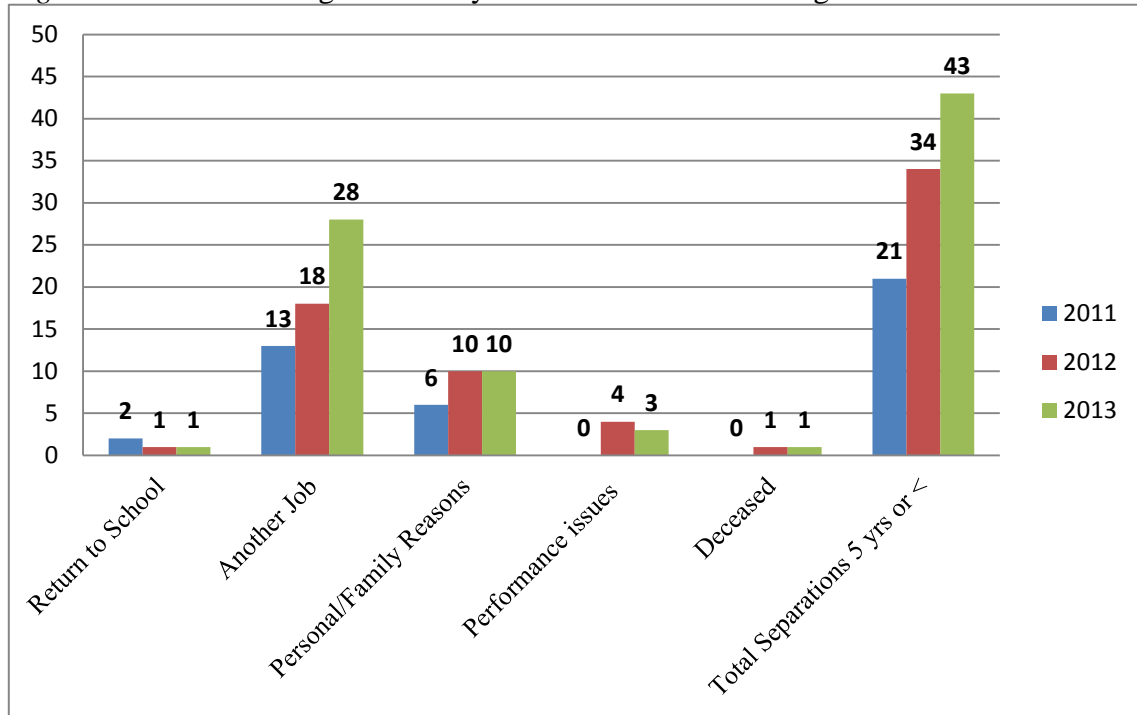
Dromgoole 2013, County Extension Agent Retention Analysis-2013

Figure 4. Reasons for Agents leaving Extension 2011 - 2013



Dromgoole 2013, County Extension Agent Retention Analysis-2013

Figure 5. Reasons for Agent with 5 years or less service leaving Extension 2011-2013



Dromgoole 2013, County Extension Agent Retention Analysis-2013

The majority of these agents separating (54.9%) were due to another job, followed by 27.1% with personal or family reasons. The combination of fluctuating work environment with competing job and family commitments can affect employees (Kutilek et al., 2002).

There are not many studies on what motivates employees to remain employed with Extension. Turnover is a problem for AgriLife Extension as increased burnout and staff turnover are monetarily expensive and an inefficient use of time management (Enslie, 2005). Herzberg (1968) theorized that employees must be motivated in order to experience job satisfaction. Several studies note the effectiveness of AgriLife Extension is dependent upon the motivation of its employees (Buford, 1990; Chesney, 1992; Smith, 1990). Knowing what motivates employees and using this knowledge will help Extension identify, recruit, employ, train, and retain a productive work force (Chandler, 2005). The theoretical base for this study utilizes professionals' research in Extension, job retention, recruitment, and turnover.

Population and Census

The subjects or population includes the 560 Texas county Extension agents within AgriLife Extension. The county Extension agents included in this study represent the following program areas: Agriculture and Natural Resources, Family and Consumer Science, 4-H and Youth Development, Coastal Marine Agent, Natural Resource, Urban Youth Development, County Extension Director, and Horticulture. A response rate of 78.5% was attained, with 440 county Extension agents responding to the instrument.

Instrument

Twenty-two questions using a Likert-type scale were utilized to collect data. The questionnaire was adapted from a previous instrument that was utilized in a study of county Extension agent turnover by Rousan (1995) in a study of Ohio State University Extension System, and then for the University of Kentucky Cooperative Extension Service (Mowbray, 2003), and later by a study on agent retention in “Texas Cooperative Extension” (Chandler, 2005). The instrument was divided into four sections: there were thirteen organization factors with one open ended question, twelve individual work related factors with one open-ended question, seven individual non work-related factors with one open-ended question, and seventeen demographic questions with two open-ended questions.

Collection and Analysis of Data

SPSS software was used to analyze the data for this study. During the months of July and August 2014, data was collected from an online survey emailed to 560 county Extension agents employed by AgriLife Extension. The Hardin-Brashears Bi-Modal method (Fraze et al., 2003) was used to improve the response rate. The initial contact was made on July 24th with an invitation email and description of purpose. The first email was followed by multiple email reminders, thank you’s and on August 15 the questionnaire was closed to responders.

Descriptive statistics are used to summarize the data. Frequencies, percentages, central tendency measures, and variability are used to describe the data. Analysis of

variance F-tests were utilized to predict the dependent variables of demographic factors with two or more choices (example: ethnicity) for reasons why county Extension agents choose to stay in Extension. Independent two sample t-tests were used to predict the dependent variables (organizational, individual work, and individual non-work factors) paired with the independent variable (demographic factors) with only two choices (example: men and women) for “reasons why county Extension agents choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.” Multiple regression analysis allowed the researcher to learn more about the relationship between several independent variables and a dependent variable. The Pearson product-moment correlation coefficient was used to assess the nature of relationship between two variables when both variables are interval level (or ratio) measurements with each variable assuming more than three values. Analysis of variance was used to predict those dependent variables (organization, individual work, and individual non-work factors) with demographic factors with two or more choices (example: ethnicity, age, years of experience) for inferring why county Extension agents choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension. Correlation matrix and reliability were calculated with Cronbach’s alpha. All observed variables, except demographics and open-ended items, were subjected to a Shapiro-Wilkes test (Royston, 1983) for normality and were found to have a normal distribution.

Research Objective One

The first objective of this research was to identify the demographics as related to factors among county Extension agents who choose to remain employed with AgriLife Extension. From the data compiled by this research we can conclude that responders were: 50.4% (210) female and 49.6% (207) male; 72% (304) are married; 48.2% (202) of agents have 1-2 children; 30.7% (129) agents are in the 41-50 age range; and 71.5% (299) agents have a Master's degree. Agriculture agents (48.7%, 203) and FCS (32.6%, 136) when combined make up 81.3% of agent positions, followed by 4-H agents (12.2%, 51). Agents with 16-20 years of employment represent 32.8% (139) of our organization, and 49.9% (206) agents in Extension are currently ranked in the Dossier Level I category. In regards to the Dossier, 65.5% (272) have not advanced on the Dossier promotion track, and the majority of Level moves was 38.3% (57) being promoted from Level I-II. Population of counties served shows 38.2% (162) of agents work in a county with a population of 50,000 or greater. A percentage of 48.7 or 203 agents have served in multiple counties with a tie on number of counties served at 49.2% having served in 1-2 and 3-5 counties in their career. The percentage of agents who did not choose Extension as their first career choice was 53.8% (225). A total of 71.1% (300) have thought about leaving Extension employment for another job opportunity. When we discuss the agents who have actually applied for another job while working for Extension we find 74.5% have not done so. Only 11.7% (49) agents have left Extension and subsequently been rehired. According to Polevoi (2013) there are benefits of rehiring as "specialist estimates that you can potentially save \$15,000 to \$20,000 per hire

“in lower cost-per-hire, faster productivity, and higher retention rate.” Rehires generally require less training and become productive much sooner than workers who are unfamiliar with your operations. That could translate to a potentially significant savings in training costs and resources.

We can also conclude that the male to female gender ratio of employees is quite close, with 50.4 (210) female and 49.6% (207) male agents employed with AgriLife Extension. Age of county Extension agents is split somewhat evenly across age ranges with 26% (109) 51 and older, 30.7% (129) being 41-50, 22.6% (95) being 31-40, and 20.7% (87) agents being 30 and younger. We can also conclude that nearly half of the agents, 49.6% (206) are Level I on the Dossier promotion track. According to responses, there are 272 agents (65.5%) that have not advanced on the Dossier promotion track. The current Dossier Level of agents indicates that the majority of agents are Level I (206), followed by Level II (98), then III (67) and finally Level IV (42). Interestingly, 139 of the participating agents have met the years of service requirement to be dossier level IV but only 42 agents are level IV; and 270 have the minimum number of years to at least advance to the next level but have not done so. It would be a good research topic to study if these agents have applied for advancement, and where not meeting minimum performance criteria to advance along the dossier or if they simply chose not to apply. The number of agents who have considered leaving AgriLife Extension for another job opportunity is 71.1%.

Research Objective Two

The second objective of this study was to determine the factors that contributed to agents choosing to stay employed with AgriLife Extension under the categories of organizational, individual work-related, and non-work related. Following with the work of Strong and Harder (2009) and Lindner (1998) if managers want to improve retention of agents they must pay attention to agent satisfaction and factors leading to satisfaction. Variety of work or scheduling was selected by 95.7% (419) of responders as a reason to stay employed with AgriLife Extension. Responders who agreed or strongly agree that interesting work is a reason to stay employed with Extension, were 94.9% or 409 responders. The opportunity to be creative through challenging work was a choice of 88.7% (383) responders as a factor to stay with Extension. A total of 88.1% (38) of responders agree or strongly agree the opportunity to contribute and make a difference in their communities was a reason to stay employed with Extension. Personal satisfaction was selected by 85.9% (370) as why they choose to remain an Extension employee. This is interesting for retention as Martin and Kaufman (2013) suggest low job satisfaction is a strong predictor of intent to quit. Data from Ingram (2006) also discusses a direct connection between interpersonal relationships in the workplace and self-identity, and job performance and satisfaction. The professional schedule or flexibility was identified by 84.4% (364) of responders as to why they stay on the Extension payroll. Agents who agree or strongly agree professional relationships with coworkers and peers through professional associations was a reason to stay employed with Extension were represented by 80.8% (346) of responders. The opportunity to know and interact with

community leaders was selected by 78.2% (336) as an incentive to stay with AgriLife Extension. Benefits or retirement package was identified by 77.7% (338) agents who agreed or strongly agreed that it was an incentive to stay with Extension. Responders agree that the opportunity for personal growth and development is an important choice to stay employed with Extension - 76.3% (274). Not having a direct supervisor managing their work regularly was also chosen as an incentive to stay employed with Extension, by 73.9% (321). A total of 72.9% (317) suggested they agree or strongly agree job security or stability was a choice to stay employed with Extension.

Organization related work factors as a choice for county Extension agents to stay employed with AgriLife Extension are listed in order of preference: variety of work or scheduling, benefit or retirement package, no direct supervisor managing my work regularly, job security or stability, and quality of support staff. Thirty-nine percent (175) of the respondents either disagree or strongly disagree that opportunities for promotion or advancement were an incentive to stay with Extension. Jennings (1998) listed salary as a reason individuals choose to remain with an organization. If salary is considered in this research, 48.8% (215) disagree or strongly disagree that salary is a reason to stay employed with Extension. This is an important statistic as Skaggs (2008) listed salary as one of the significant factors leading to employee turnover. A total of 29.1% (128) responders disagree or strongly disagree that recognition from supervisor is a reason to stay employed with Texas Extension.

Individual work factors as a choice for agents to stay employed with AgriLife Extension are listed in order of preference: interesting work, opportunity to be creative

through challenging work, personal satisfaction, schedule (flexible), relationship with coworkers and peers through professional associations, and recognition from clientele they serve. There were 34.8% (153) responders who disagreed or strongly disagreed with manageable workload as a reason to continue employment with AgriLife Extension. Herzberg (1966) term *job enrichment* — the process of redesigning work in order to build in motivators by increasing both the variety of tasks that an employee performs and the control over those tasks provides an insight on redesigning current job responsibilities for county Extension agents. Factors must be provided to avoid employee dissatisfaction (Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, 2010) and must provide factors intrinsic to the work itself in order for employees to be satisfied with their jobs. Twenty-five percent (110) disagreed or strongly disagreed with opportunity to be involved in organizational decisions as a factor to remain an AgriLife Extension employee.

The individual non-work related factors why county Extension agents choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension are: opportunity to contribute to my community, opportunity to know and interact with community leaders, opportunity for personal growth and development, and my professional status in the community. Opportunity for outside financial interest was a concern for 156 responders or 35.4% as they either disagreed or strongly disagreed that outside financial interest was a reason they choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.

Research Objective Three

The purpose of objective three is to identify patterns and define relationships between factors that contribute to retention of county Extension agents. The majority of relationships for organizational, individual work and individual non-work related factors are moderate (.30-.49). When comparing “recognition from supervisor” and “quality and support from direct supervisor,” a very strong relationship exists of $r=.69$, ($p<.00$). “Quality or support of administration” and “quality and support from direct supervisor” also showed a strong relationship of $r=.62$, ($p<.00$). This is an area of importance as work conducted by Kutilek (2000), who identified lack of supervisory support as one of the top reasons contributing to agent departure. The correlation between “my professional status in the community” and “interact with community leaders” was $r=.57$, ($p<.00$). “Manageable workload” and “job requirements or expectations” showed a slightly strong relationship of $r=.53$, ($p<.00$). The “opportunity to be creative through challenging work” was also slightly strong with a relationship or $r=.52$, ($p<.00$). Another strong relationship was “opportunity for outside financial interest” at $r=.50$, ($p<.00$).

Research Objective Four

The purpose of objective four is to identify patterns and themes that can be used as predictors of why county Extension agents choose to remain employed with AgriLife Extension. Analysis of variance testing indicated that agents with fewer than 3 years of employment ($M=3.53$, $SD=.52$) are more likely to agree or strongly agree that

organizational related factors, individual work related factors ($M=3.83$, $SD=.44$), and non-work related factors ($M=3.64$, $SD=.48$) are an incentive to stay employed in Extension as compared with agents who have been employed for 3-5, 6-10, 11-15, and 16-20+ years. County Extension agents who have a Bachelor's degree are more likely to agree or strongly agree that organizational related factors ($M=3.50$, $SD=.45$), and individual non-work related factors ($M=3.61$, $SD=.50$) are an incentive to choose to stay employed in Extension as compared with agents who have Masters or Doctorate degrees. The county Extension agents who have served in 3-5 counties ($M=3.43$, $SD=.50$) tend to agree or strongly agree that organizational related factors are an incentive to remain with Extension as compared to county agents who have served in 1-2, or more than 5 counties. The county Extension agents who have worked in more than 5 counties ($M=3.95$, $SD=.36$) tend to agree or strongly agree that individual work related factors are an incentive to stay employed in Extension as compared to county agents who have served in 1-2, or 3-5 counties.

Independent sample *t*-tests were also used to predict significant differences amongst variables. Female ($M=3.81$, $SD=.46$) agents tend to agree or strongly agree that individual work related factors were an incentive to stay employed with AgriLife Extension as compared to their male counterparts. There was a significant difference for agents who have served in multiple counties ($M=3.33$, $SD=.57$) versus those who have not served in multiple counties in organizational factors and individual non-work factors ($M=3.45$, $SD=.63$) as an incentive to stay employed with AgriLife Extension. There is a significant difference for agents who have not considered leaving AgriLife Extension for

another job opportunity (M=3.69, SD=.53) in organizational related factors, individual work factors (M=3.98, SD=.40), and non-work related individual factors (M=3.76, SD=.49). For organizational factors and retention of Extension agents who have applied for another job while employed with Extension, there is a significant difference. However it is for those who have chosen not to apply for another job (M=3.49, SD=.53), also in individual work factors (M=3.82, SD=.45), and for individual non-work related factors (M=3.57, SD=.56).

Findings from Open-Ended Questions

There were five open-ended questions provided to respondents to provide further feedback and explain why they strongly agreed on specific responses as to why they remain employed with Extension. The general findings from open-ended questions were:

1. The primary reason agents (47.7%) have contemplated leaving AgriLife Extension employment was salary.
2. Respondents strongly agree variety (39.5%) and flexibility (18.5%) are incentives to remain an employee of AgriLife Extension.
3. Agents remain dedicated to serving their communities (32.9%)
4. Data suggest agents (19.75) find “service” as an incentive for agent retention.

Recommendations for Texas A&M AgriLife Extension

The following recommendations were formulated based upon the findings of this study. Recommendations are categorized by the objectives of this study, which were organizational, individual work, and individual non work-related factors influencing agents to choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension.

Organizational Related Factors

1. Administration and direct supervisors should continue to allow for variety in every day job tasks, as well as allowing agents flexibility in programming and completing job requirements as long as accountability requirements are being met. Compensatory time being a reward is not promoted by this research. It is recommended that Administration continue to support and empower human resources to offer employees strong benefit package options.
2. Direct supervisors and Administrators should place a high priority on managing job satisfaction and agent motivation to reduce agent turnover. If there is an increase in agents' commitment to their responsibilities, the data points to a decrease in turnover. The idea of doing more with less has its limits. Job responsibility and job expectations should be re-evaluated or adjusted to increase agent acceptance of responsibilities and expectations. Agent vacancies place undue burden on staff, neighboring agents and the agency in general. Continued vacancies of positions leads to less efficiency and lower performance from remaining staff and more turnover. Tasks (reports, paperwork) should be streamlined to ensure efficiency and reduce task repetitiveness.

3. Direct supervisors and Administrators should continue supporting agents, cultivate personal relationships with them, and increase emphasis on agent recognition when appropriate. Data from this research suggest that roughly half of county Extension agents are satisfied with the current leadership and the remainder are not. There is a need to measure and quantify agents commitment to Extension.

4. It is recommended that Administration continue to offer salary enhancement through programs such as the Dossier promotion track, research other salary enhancement options, and place a higher emphasis on increasing agent salary based on performance. If a higher salary is desirable and attainable, it is logical to assume that higher quality applicants could be attracted and quality Extension agents should be easier to retain. Performance expectations may be the same for every agent but rewards should match agent job performance.

5. Further evaluation of Dossier applications, guidelines, and selection criteria is needed to improve acceptance and increase participation of agents who apply for Dossier promotion. The Dossier promotion track is voluntary, and it offers salary enhancement to agents who complete the document and are identified as worthy for advancement on the promotion track. There must be a reason why agents are not more accepting of this salary enhancement avenue.

Individual Related Work Factors

1. Administrators and direct supervisors are encouraged to prioritize programs that emerge from local planning groups in which agents are involved. It is important that

AgriLife Extension Administrators continue to allow agents flexibility and variety in programming. Interesting and challenging work are incentives for agents to stay employed with Extension.

2. Administrators and direct supervisors are encouraged to modify job responsibilities and expectations to ensure high quality of programs rather than high quantity. The data suggest that agents are concerned about how their actual job responsibilities fit with supervisory expectations. If management expectations are not realistic and agent job responsibilities continue growing, the result will probably be less than satisfactory.

3. It is suggested that Administration and direct supervisors continue to encourage agent participation and involvement in their respective professional associations, and allow time to be allocated for this purpose. Professional associations allow free exchange of ideas and serve as a valuable means for management and direct supervisors to “take the pulse” of their agents. Membership also allows agents to learn from the experience of their peers. Mentoring of less experienced employees is a common practice of professional associations.

4. The organization would benefit by continuing a close evaluation of turnover trends among agents with fewer than three years service, to validate current onboarding programs are increasing retention of new hires. Since agents with fewer than three years on the job cite individual work related factors as a reason to remain with Extension, this is preliminary evidence that onboarding, mentoring programs are enjoying some success. Nonetheless, turnover rates remain higher than desired.

Individual Non-Work Related Factors

1. Administration and direct supervisors are encouraged to continue strengthening county and Extension partnerships. Community or local support of AgriLife Extension supports salaries, travel and professional development of county Extension agents. The most popular individual non-work related factors why county Extension agents choose to stay employed with AgriLife Extension is a common thread of community: contribute to my community, and know and interact with community leaders. The utilization of local program area committees must be prioritized over top down programming and department driven programming. Banner programs may look good on paper but major diffusion of innovation occurs from and on the local level.

2. It is suggested that opportunity for personal growth and development of agents should continue to be a priority of supervisors and Administration. As early as 1987, Clark recognized that continuous, quality human resource development programs were critical to the survival of Cooperative Extension. Agents face competition from private industry and need opportunities to broaden their knowledge base. Agents value their professional status in the community and seek to continue being “the” source of unbiased factual information; continued professional development opportunities are critical, especially for new agents. Professional development opportunities should be of a higher level than mandatory training sessions that agents often find less than productive. One quality training is much more beneficial than multiple low quality professional development opportunities.

3. Administration is encouraged to continue allowing agent outside financial interests and opportunities. These outside financial opportunities can lead to more partnerships for Extension, especially in small colleges. The variety of county Extension agent responsibilities and focus allow for various personal interests to be met.
4. Administration is highly encouraged to consider how valuable family time is to an agent, especially when job responsibilities take precedence over family time. The data show that satisfaction and motivation are critical in agent performance and retention. Dissatisfaction of agents is often from too many night and afternoon responsibilities which take employees away from family. Extension promoted wellness for clientele but must instill wellness and family time into our own daily practices.

Suggestions for Future Research

First and foremost, evaluations and research are not useful if the results are not interpreted and utilized. This study would be strengthened if the information gained is passed along to Administration and supervisory management, at least in summary form. If the suggested recommendations were implemented, the results could be measured and further incremental improvements seem reasonable. For example, a list of reasons or factors to stay employed with Extension could be provided and respondents asked to rank them on a scale from “incentive to stay” and “incentive to leave.” Agents could be asked for salary range, ethnicity, and marital status (include divorced and remarried for more demographics of county Extension agents). Factors for choosing to stay employed with AgriLife Extension could be grouped as “variety” and “flexibility,” which would

likely decrease some of the random low response answers. Defining organizational, individual work and non-work related factors with fewer options from which to choose on the survey could also better define factors for retention.

Conducting an exit survey with similar questions for every person who leaves AgriLife Extension could provide valuable information. By questioning people who have chosen to leave Extension with these questions, a better understanding of detrimental factors might well be identified.

A different study based solely on grouping the keyword comments could be conducted. Many keyword comments offered several answers rather than one clear topic or subject. Another option would be to offer questions that included the majority of the keyword comments and asking responders to rank the items in order of being an incentive to stay employed with Extension. The keyword comments could be taken another step farther with a series of question and answer sessions similar to the Texas Community Future Forums Format, but offered online. Start with more open-ended questions, such as: why are more agents not applying for the Dossier system?; what are benefits of single line supervision?; provide examples of specialists not offering support to county agents; provide examples of successful alternative education events; identify perceived inefficiencies within the 4-H program, etc. These responses to open-ended comments could be compiled and narrowed into more specialized questions after the initial ranking and sent again as an online instrument with comments then offering a more specialized report of county agents' response. This format could offer a different

method of gauging agent opinion and provide more information to leadership on agent retention.

With satisfaction and motivation, dossier and salary come to mind. There were multiple comments about salary and being paid for high performance. Performance evaluations could be redesigned from the current levels of measurement to: not meeting expectations, meeting minimum expectations, exceeding expectations, exemplary performance. Agents meeting exemplary performance would be considered for employee salary enhancement. When money is available employees with exceeding expectations could be rewarded. More research could be conducted on revamping the current performance evaluation system and matching evaluation results with salary enhancement suggestions.

Too often administration or mid-managers within Extension will attempt to redesign Extension methods of educational programming. The county Extension agent method of educational delivery through the program area committees continues to be the best method to bring the university to the people. Existing problems are not the result of the current Extension method or model. Highly qualified and committed county Extension agents are the key ingredient to deliver Extension education to the people of Texas.

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APPENDIX A

IRB APPROVAL LETTER

DIVISION OF RESEARCH


Research Compliance and Biosafety



DATE: July 17, 2014

MEMORANDUM

TO: Scott Cummings
ALRSRCH - Agrilife Research - Ag Leadership, Education & Communication

FROM: Dr. James Fluckey 
Chair
Institutional Review Board

SUBJECT: Initial Review Submission Form

Study Number: IRB2014-0380D

Title: ORGANIZATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL FACTORS RELATED TO RETENTION
OF COUNTY EXTENSION AGENTS EMPLOYED BY TEXAS AGRILIFE
EXTENSION SERVICE

Review Type: Expedite

Approval Date: 07/17/2014

**Continuing
Review Due:** 06/15/2015

**Expiration
Date:** 07/15/2015

**Documents
Reviewed and
Approved:** Form - Waiver of Consent or Documentation 7.7.14 (Version 1.0)
dissertation proposal (Version 1.0) Steele
Script (Version 1.1)
Employee_Retention_Survey-4 (Version 1.0)

Document of Consent: Waiver approved under 45 CFR 46.117 (c) 1 or 2/ 21 CFR 56.109
(c)1

This research project has been approved. As principal investigator, you assume the following responsibilities:

1. **Continuing Review:** The protocol must be renewed by the expiration date in order to continue with the research project. A Continuing Review application along with required documents must be submitted by the continuing review deadline. Failure to do so may result in processing delays, study termination, and/or loss of funding.
2. **Completion Report:** Upon completion of the research project (including data analysis and final written papers), a Completion Report must be submitted to the IRB.
3. **Unanticipated Problems and Adverse Events:** Unanticipated problems and adverse events must be reported to the IRB immediately.
4. **Reports of Potential Non-compliance:** Potential non-compliance, including deviations from protocol and violations, must be reported to the IRB office immediately.

750 Agronomy Road, Suite 2701
1186 TAMU
College Station, TX 77843-1186
Tel. 979.458.1467 Fax. 979.862.3176
<http://rcb.tamu.edu>

Amendments: Changes to the protocol must be requested by submitting an Amendment to the IRB for review. The Amendment must be approved by the IRB before being implemented.

6. **Consent Forms:** When using a consent form or information sheet, you must use the IRB stamped approved version. Please log into iRIS to download your stamped approved version of the consenting instruments. If you are unable to locate the stamped version in iRIS, please contact the office.
7. **Audit:** Your protocol may be subject to audit by the Human Subjects Post Approval Monitor. During the life of the study please review and document study progress using the PI self-assessment found on the RCB website as a method of preparation for the potential audit. Investigators are responsible for maintaining complete and accurate study records and making them available for inspection. Investigators are encouraged to request a pre-initiation site visit with the Post Approval Monitor. These visits are designed to help ensure that all necessary documents are approved and in order prior to initiating the study and to help investigators maintain compliance.
8. **Recruitment:** All approved recruitment materials will be stamped electronically by the HSPP staff and available for download from iRIS. These IRB-stamped approved documents from iRIS must be used for recruitment. For materials that are distributed to potential participants electronically and for which you can only feasibly use the approved text rather than the stamped document, the study's IRB Protocol number, approval date, and expiration dates must be included in the following format: TAMU IRB#20XX-XXXX Approved: XX/XX/XXXX Expiration Date: XX/XX/XXXX.
9. **FERPA and PPRA:** Investigators conducting research with students must have appropriate approvals from the FERPA administrator at the institution where the research will be conducted in accordance with the Family Education Rights and Privacy Act (FERPA). The Protection of Pupil Rights Amendment (PPRA) protects the rights of parents in students ensuring that written parental consent is required for participation in surveys, analysis, or evaluation that ask questions falling into categories of protected information.
10. **Food:** Any use of food in the conduct of human subjects research must follow Texas A&M University Standard Administrative Procedure 24.01.01.M4.02.
11. **Payments:** Any use of payments to human subjects must follow Texas A&M University Standard Administrative Procedure 21.01.99.M0.03.

This electronic document provides notification of the review results b

APPENDIX B

ORGANIZATIONAL AND INDIVIDUAL FACTORS RELATED TO RETENTION
OF COUNTY EXTENSION AGENTS EMPLOYED BY TEXAS A&M AGRILIFE
EXTENSION SERVICE SURVEY

Q1 I choose to stay employed as a CEA with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

because of:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Opportunities for promotion or advancement (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Variety of work or scheduling (every day is different) (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality office environment/facilities/equipment (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality of support staff (secretaries) (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recognition from supervisor (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality/support of Administration (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Benefit or retirement package (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Salary (compared to other similar education jobs in community) (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job security or stability (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality/support of Extension specialist (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
No direct supervisor managing my work regularly (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Task repetitiveness (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Quality/support from direct supervisor (13)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q2 Please explain in detail on items you answered “strongly agree” to remain employed as a CEA with Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

Q3 I choose to stay employed as a CEA with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

because of:

	Very Dissatisfied (1)	Dissatisfied (2)	Neutral (3)	Satisfied (4)	Very Satisfied (5)
Manageable workload (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Interesting work (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to travel on the job (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Recognition from clientele I serve (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities for professional development (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional scheduling (flexible) (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to be involved in organizational decisions (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Personal Satisfaction (8)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Job requirements/expectations (9)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Professional Relationships with co-workers and peers through professional associations. (10)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to be creative through challenging work (11)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to have my children involved in my work through 4-H (12)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q4 Please explain those items you chose “strongly agree” to stay employed with Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

Q5 I choose to stay employed as a CEA with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service

because of:

	Strongly Disagree (1)	Disagree (2)	Neither Agree nor Disagree (3)	Agree (4)	Strongly Agree (5)
Opportunity for personal growth and development (1)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity for outside financial interest (2)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
My professional status in the community (3)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to know and interact with community leaders (4)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunities to pursue personal interest (5)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to spend time with family (6)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Opportunity to contribute to my community (7)	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>

Q6 Please explain in detail why you chose those items answered “strongly agree” to employed with Texas AgriLife Extension Service.

Q7 Please select your position title: Agriculture/Natural Resources (Ag/Nr), Family Consumer Science (FCS), Urban Youth Development (UYD), Horticulture (Hort), Marine, Natural Resource (NR), 4-H, or County Director (D)

- CEA-Ag/NR (1)
- CEA-FCS (2)
- CEA-UYD (3)
- CEA-Hort (4)
- CEA-Marine (5)
- CEA-NR (6)
- CEA-4-H (7)
- CEA-D (8)

Q8 Years employed by Texas AgriLife Extension Service

- Less than 3 years (1)
- 3-5 year (2)
- 6-10 years (3)
- 11-15 years (4)
- 16-20+ years (5)

Q9 Population of the county you serve:

- less than 2,000 (1)
- 2,001 – 10,000 (2)
- 10,001 – 20,000 (3)
- 20,001 – 50,000 (4)
- 50,001 and greater (5)

Q10 Current Dossier Level?

- I (1)
- II (2)
- III (3)
- IV (4)

Q11 Have you advanced along the Dossier promotion track? (If you answer “Yes”

please answer the next question)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q12 If you have advanced along the Dossier promotion track, from what levels have you

advanced? (check all that apply)

- I to II (1)
- II to III (2)
- III to IV (3)

Q13 Please select the range your age is in:

- 30 and younger (1)
- 31-40 (2)
- 41-50 (3)
- 51 and older (4)

Q14 Marital status:

- Married (1)
- Single (2)

Q15 Number of children:

- No Children (1)
- 1-2 (2)
- 2-3 (3)
- 3 or more (4)

Q16 Education level (please select the highest level obtained):

- Bachelors (1)
- Masters (2)
- Doctorate (3)

Q17 Gender:

- Male (1)
- Female (2)

Q18 Was Extension your first career choice?

- True (1)
- False (2)

Q19 Have you served in more than one county?(If you answer “Yes” please answer the next question)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q20 If you have served in more than one county, how many?

- 1 – 2 Counties (1)
- 3 – 5 Counties (2)
- Over 5 Counties (3)

Q21 Have you thought about leaving Extension for another job opportunity?(If you answer “Yes” please answer the next question)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q22 If you thought about leaving for another job opportunity, for what reasons?

Q23 Have you left Extension and been rehired

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q24 Have applied for another job while employed with Texas AgriLife Extension

Service? (If you answer ‘Yes’ please answer the next question)

- Yes (1)
- No (2)

Q25 If you have seriously thought about leaving Extension for another job, but did not pursue another job why did you choose to stay employed with Texas AgriLife Extension Service?

APPENDIX C

County Extension Agents:

Shane McLellan is currently working on the dissertation “Organizational and Individual Factors Related to Retention of County Extension Agents Employed by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service”. I am requesting your help in assessing agent retention within our agency.

The purpose of this study is to identify why county Extension agents choose to stay employed with Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service. Please take a few moments of your time to share your opinion and experience. We believe the results of this research will ultimately benefit agent recruitment and retention. Your responses are voluntary and will be kept confidential.

The link to the online survey is:

https://agrilife.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_ai2JfaDGIYspQAR

Your response is important. The survey will close on August 15, 2014. It will take approximately 15 minutes to complete the survey.

If you have any questions about this survey instrument, please contact Shane McLellan at (254)757-5180 and/or Dr. Scott Cummings at (979)847-9388, or by email at s-mclellan@tamu.edu, or s-cummings@tamu.edu.

Susan Ballabina, Ph.D.
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College Station, Texas 77843
979-862-3932 | fax: 979-845-9542

County Extension Agents:

2nd Notice, July 28

Good morning and "Thank you" to all that have responded to the survey request for my dissertation "Organizational and Individual Factors Related to Retention of County Extension Agents Employed by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service."

If you haven't completed the survey, please do so. The link to the online survey is:
https://agrilife.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_ai2JfaDGIYspQAR

Your response is important. The survey will close on August 15, 2014. Survey response time has been as quick as 3 minutes to as long as 15 minutes to complete the survey. Your responses are voluntary and will be kept confidential.

If you have any questions about this survey instrument, please contact me at (254)757-5180 and/or Dr. Scott Cummings at (979)847-9388, or by email at s-mclellan@tamu.edu, or s-cummings@tamu.edu.

Shane McLellan - CEA, Ag

Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service
Texas A&M University System

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(254)757-5180
s-mclellan@tamu.edu

County Extension Agents:

reminder, July 31

Again, I just want to say "Thank you" to all that have responded to the survey request for my dissertation "Organizational and Individual Factors Related to Retention of County Extension Agents Employed by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service." Your responses are voluntary and will be kept confidential.

If you haven't completed the survey, please do so. The link to the online survey is:
https://agrilife.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_ai2JfaDGIYspQAR

Your response is important. The survey will close on August 15, 2014. Survey response time has been as quick as 3-5 minutes.

If you have any questions about this survey instrument, please contact me at (254)757-5180 and/or Dr. Scott Cummings at (979)847-9388, or by email at s-mclellan@tamu.edu, or s-cummings@tamu.edu.

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County Extension Agents:

4th Notice, Aug 6

All,

To all those that have completed my survey request.....“Big Thank You.” For those that haven't had time to complete the survey, please do so. The link to the online survey is: https://agrilife.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_ai2JfaDGIYspQAR .

The protocol for my survey requires me to make 5 contact reminders to ensure my response rate is acceptable. I know you are tired of getting reminders from me BUT 63% of you completed the survey with 37% not participating. Also ,there are 11 of you that started the survey and didn't finish it.

The survey will close on August 15, 2014.

Again, thanks to those participating and if you have any questions about this survey instrument, please contact me at (254)757-5180 and/or Dr. Scott Cummings at (979)847-9388, or by email at s-mclellan@tamu.edu, or s-cummings@tamu.edu.

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County Extension Agents:

5th and final notice, Aug 10

This the last contact I will make concerning the survey request for my dissertation “Organizational and Individual Factors Related to Retention of County Extension Agents Employed by Texas A&M AgriLife Extension Service.” Thank you to 391 that have completed the survey instrument. I do appreciate it greatly. I will run the statistics on your responses next week. As time permits I will write up the results and then make my findings available for all to view.

If you haven’t completed the survey, please do so. The link to the online survey is:

https://agrilife.az1.qualtrics.com/SE/?SID=SV_ai2JfaDGIYspQAR

The survey will close on August 15, 2014.

If you have any questions about this survey instrument, please contact me at (254)757-5180 and/or Dr. Scott Cummings at (979)847-9388, or by email at s-mclellan@tamu.edu, or s-cummings@tamu.edu.

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